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En Route

Roy Trevor.

CTV

13

Chatham

EN ROUTE

AN AUTOMOBILE TOUR THROUGH EUROPE

THE NINETEEN PASSES AND THEIR HEIGHTS ABOVE SEA LEVEL IN ENGLISH FEET ARE

Stelvio Pass	9200	Campiglio Pass	5500
Pordoi Pass	7400	Karer Pass	5300
Splügen Pass	7000	Pillon Pass	5000
Mont Cenis Pass	6900	Finstermünz	5000
St. Gotthard Pass	6900	Mendel	5500
Simplon Pass	6600	Brenner	4500
Klausen Pass	6500	Aprica	4500
Tonale Pass	6200	Brünig	3300
Rolle Pass	6000	Roncesvalles Pass	3200
Arlberg Pass	5900		

AND SEVERAL OTHERS OF LESSER IMPORTANCE

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HERE THE ROAD IS CUT IN THE ROCKY FACE OF THE CLIFF
LAKE OF THUN

EN ROUTE

A DESCRIPTIVE AUTOMOBILE TOUR THROUGH NINE COUNTRIES & OVER NINETEEN GREAT PASSES OF EUROPE

BY William Roy Chadburn.

ROY TREVOR

WITH NINETY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS
TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR, AND
THREE MAPS

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TO

MY FATHER

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

81X685

PREFACE

In the following pages I have endeavoured to describe a journey through Europe by road. I have curtailed it considerably, having avoided descriptions of Cities and Monuments which have been chronicled many times before by writers more worthy than myself to sing their praises. Having been restricted almost entirely to the route and the incidents thereon, I have tried to lighten the somewhat unavoidable sameness of the one subject as far as lay in my power. Perhaps the only virtue that can be claimed for this narrative is its absolute truthfulness in every particular. Each mile of road described has been faithfully traversed, and the incidents of the troublesome horses are not, in the slightest degree, exaggerated.

Distances have been left strictly alone; for upon tours such as these *Distance* has no bearing whatever, and, with *Time*, takes a secondary place; both are immaterial. Names of hotels I have avoided, for several reasons. A hotel which, upon a first visit, has appealed to one as delightful and altogether charming, may, under a change of management, be found greatly lacking the next time one stays there, and *vice versâ*. The few that are named are those only that have been distinguished by some incident out of the common.

From Brockedon's "Passes of the Alps," published in 1828 (two volumes), a most instructive and

intensely interesting work, I have quoted several times.

I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Royal Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland for their generous help, both in regard to maps and information; also for the unfailing courtesy with which they have ever treated my inquiries.

In conclusion, I would say that I and my companions do not claim to have accomplished anything very great or wonderful; and the only object I have in throwing our adventures upon the world in general is that they may be of service to fellow automobilists in planning out their tours, and, maybe, help them to discover fresh glories, unknown to the uninitiated. I trust this book will be received in the spirit in which it is meant, and that those favoured mortals who are fated to pass over the same roads may enjoy their varied adventures as completely as we did those which happened to us while *En Route*.

ROY TREVOR

EASTBOURNE

It has been pointed out to me that by reason of the number of times I have mentioned the Mercédès car, I may be thought to have a financial interest in that Company. I desire to state that I have no interest whatever in the Mercédès Company, and such praise or mention as is bestowed upon the car has been called forth solely by virtue of its own excellence and wonderful powers of endurance.

ROY TREVOR

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PART I

CENTRAL EUROPE

A

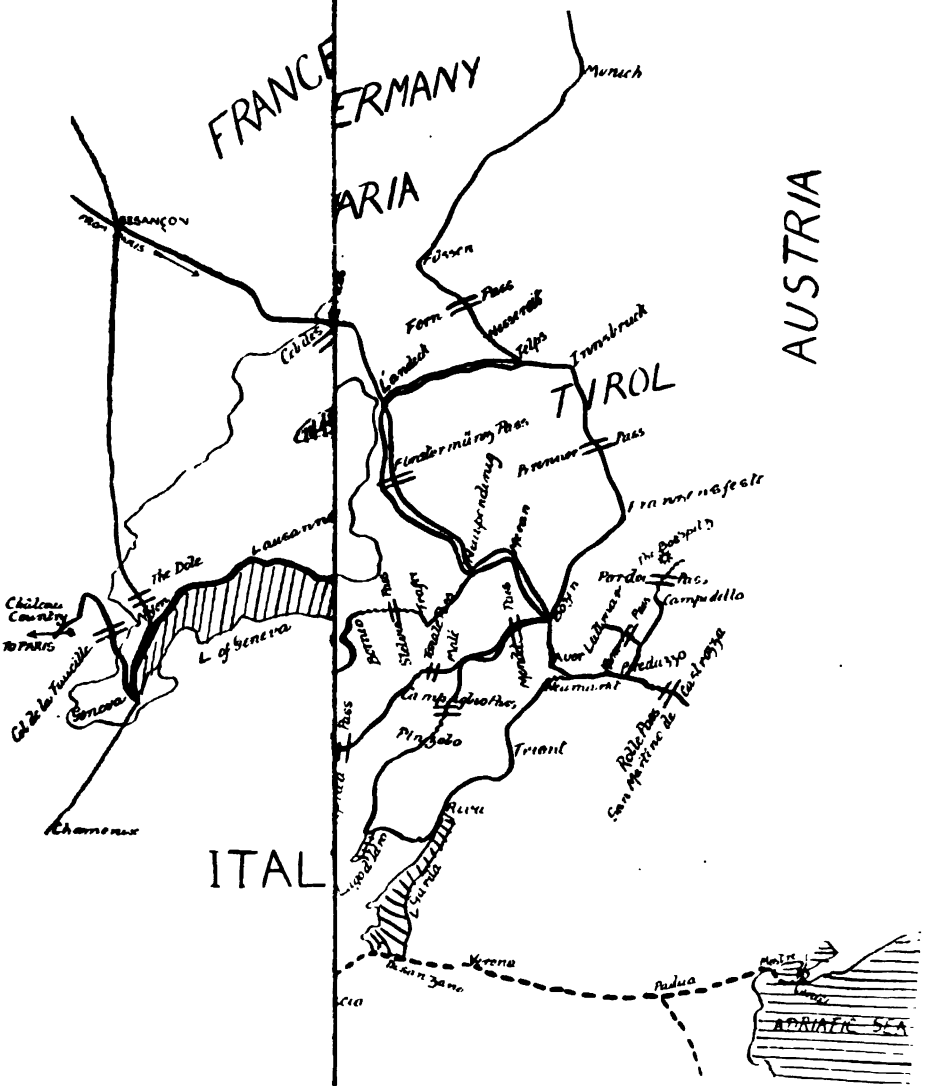
MAP I.—MIDDLE EUROPE

NOTE. As part of the road was traversed more than once the following is a list of the Towns and Passes in order to enable the reader to follow more accurately the route.

Paris : Troyes : Besançon : *Col des Roches* (Swiss frontier) : Neuchâtel : Berne : Lake of Thun : Interlaken : Grindelwald : Interlaken : Lake of Brienz : Meiringen : *Brünig Pass* : Lucerne : Lake Lucerne : Brunnen : Lake of Uri : Axenstrasse : Altdorf : Göschenen : *St. Gothard Pass* : Airolo : Bellinzona : Lake Maggiore : Locarno (Italian frontier) : Palanza : Domo d'Ossola : Iselle (Swiss frontier) : *Simplon Pass* : Brigue : Visp : Zermatt : Visp : Brigue : *Simplon Pass* (Italian frontier) : Domo d'Ossola : Omegna : Lake Orta : Orta : Sesto Calende : Varese : Lake Como : Como : Villa d'Este : Lecco : Varenna : Colico : Val Tellina : Sondrio : Tirano : Borneo (Austrian frontier) : *Stelvio Pass* : Trafoi : Neuspondinig : Meran : Bozen : *Mendel Pass* : Malé : *Campiglio Pass* : Pinzolo : Lago d'Idro : Lake Garda : Riva : Trient : Neumarkt : Predazzo : *The Rolle Pass* : San Martino de Castrozza : *Rolle Pass* : Predazzo : Vigo : *Karer Pass* : Vigo : Campidello : *Pordoi Pass* : Campidello : Predazzo : Auer : Bozen : Franzensfeste : *Brenner Pass* : Innsbruck : Landeck : *Finstermünz Pass*: Neuspondinig : Finstermünz : Landeck: *Arlberg Pass* : Feldkirch (Swiss frontier) : Buchs : Lake of Wallenstadt : Obstalden : Glarus : Linthal : *Klausen Pass* : Altdorf : Brunnen : Lucerne : *Brünig Pass* : Interlaken : Spiez : Saanen : *Col du Pillon* : Aigle : Lake of Geneva : Lausanne : Rolle : Geneva (French frontier) : *Col de la Faucille* : Bourg : Château country : Tours : Blois : Orléans : Paris.

Frontiers marked in black ink. Tour in green ink. The Mountain Passes are underlined with green and red ink. Dotted green line indicates Route of second Tour (South Europe. Part II.). Red ink line indicates Route of North Tour (Part III.).

Map I. CENTRA


FRANCE
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Füssen
Fern Pass
Nesselwängle
Telfs
Innsbruck
Landeck
Cubles
Flirtermüng Pass
Brenner Pass
Brunsponding
Meran
Lausanne
The Dole
Château Country
To Paris
L. of Geneva
Geneva
Chamonix
Pass
Campiglio Pass
Pinzolo
Trient
Riva
Verona
Padua
Adriatic Sea

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CHAPTER I

PERSEVERENTIA VINCIT

"WHAT will Ken say?" remarked Dorothy.

"He won't say *no*, if you ask him," murmured I.

"It would be a ripping tour—do try and persuade him," pleaded Sheila, eagerly.

"Well, if Roy will propose it, I'll back him up," promised Dorothy at last. And then I knew that the battle was more than half won.

Dorothy is my sister, and Ken's wife; while Sheila—well, Sheila is Ken's sister, and has promised to become my wife. Ken is my old school chum, with whom I was spending a few months at his fine old place in the North of Scotland.

The proposal referred to was that instead of spending their summer as usual, aboard Ken's yacht, Sheila, Dorothy and himself, should accompany me in my new car, for a protracted tour on the Continent. At first sight there seems nothing startling in the proposal, or any reason for the above conversation, nor would there have been were Ken an ordinary unbiased mortal. Ken, I am sorry to say, was a confirmed anti-motorist, and regarded all people who enjoyed motoring, as "harmful maniacs."

Being entirely devoted to horses, and spending much of his time riding and driving, his acquaintance with motors had, up to the present, been of anything but a pleasant and love-inspiring nature. According to him, it mainly consisted of having one's arms pulled out of their sockets by an iron-mouthed thoroughbred, while a beastly, noisy, tin-kettle on wheels (those were his very words) rushed past, not only leaving behind it smell enough to take the green out of the grass, but also leaving one vainly hurling blessings and other things (mainly other things), in a cloud of suffocating dust. I remember some years ago, how mercilessly he chuckled when I told him I had been fined ten pounds and costs for travelling at the rate of 15 m.p.h., on a straight and lonely road—it was in the days of the twelve-mile limit. Instead of the sympathy I was expecting, he loudly congratulated himself that he lived in a land where the myrmidons of the law kept such a firm check on scorchers—scorchers, mark you, at 15 m.p.h.!

Unfortunately my new car was in the hands of a coachbuilder in Paris; and at Ken's earnest request, all forms of self-propelled vehicles were tabooed at Graham Castle. Therefore I had no opportunity of ridding his mind of the ridiculous notions he entertained, or of changing his opinions on motoring generally.

And now I was to propose to him that he should forsake the delights and comforts of his yacht, and come for a tour in unknown lands, on a death-dealing apparatus which I was pleased to call a

"car." Well could I imagine the sarcasm with which he would utter the word "Car." When I calmly contemplated it, the proposal almost appalled me by its daring. Ere I tackled Ken, my first care had been to enlist Sheila and Dorothy on my side. As neither of them had had any experience of motoring, it took no little persuasion on my part, at first; but to my joy, they soon became converts, and entered into the idea with enthusiasm. I felt sure that with Dorothy on my side, Ken's consent was practically safe, for her smallest wish is law to him. So it was with high hopes of success that I laid the proposal before him one morning, during breakfast. Ken was raising his coffee to his lips when I put the question, and with it balanced perilously in mid-air, he regarded me, speechless. Ere he could recover his breath, Dorothy became my advocate, and it was under her skilful management that he finally yielded to what he was pleased to term: "Risking all our necks on a nerve-shattering bone-shaker."

"She's anything but a bone-shaker!" I cried indignantly. "Only wait till you have tried her, and you'll admit that it is the smoothest motion you've ever experienced."

Ken ignored my remark, and wanted to know full particulars of the car, and where I proposed to tour.

"She's a Mercédès," I said; "which spells perfection, and is to my mind the finest touring car in existence. The dear old dad gave her to me for a birthday present this January, and I have

thoroughly tested her, by a month's hard running. She is of 70 h.p. and has——"

"Seventy h.p.?" interrupted Ken. "Whatever induced your governor to give you a car of that murderous horse-power?"

"It isn't murderous horse-power," I cut in. "You will find that a powerful car, in experienced hands, is far less dangerous than many of the lighter cars which fly about. When you are aboard her, you will not be able to tell that she has such 'murderous horse-power,' as you call it, beneath her bonnet; while in traffic she will be passed, again and again, by much smaller cars. It is only when one has a straight road, or a long hill to face, that one can tell the difference, and then you will thank your stars that it is so. I'm going to have my say, this time; so don't interrupt," I hastily added; for we were now on debatable ground, and I saw him preparing to renew his arguments with all the hereditary vigour of a bull taunted by a red rag. "As to where we are going," I continued, "I am not quite sure: anyway, we shall make for Switzerland, and spend our time climbing as many of the passes as are open to us. I want to test the fearful accounts I hear of the treatment of motorists in that part of the world."

"I have a fellow-feeling for the Swiss," broke in Ken, "if they are down on motorists. When do we start?"

"The sooner the better," I answered, quickly terminating the interview, fearful lest he should repent.

To say that I was charmed with the prospect in store, would be to describe my feelings too mildly. The idea of revealing to Sheila the joys of motoring, of travelling with her through the magnificence of the Alps, was a prospect beyond my most cherished dreams.

For Sheila is—just Sheila; hard to describe, with a beauty above the ordinary, and a nature that is sweetness itself. Ever the idol of the rough, uncouth crofters on her brother's estate, her tender sweet manner has endeared her to their hearts, in a thousand different ways. How many times "Mistress Sheila" has brought sunshine into their lonely lives, either by word or deed, is legend. Ever ready to listen to the poorest, to comfort the distressed, to care for the destitute, she is beloved by all with whom she comes in contact. The horses in the stables raise their heads with whinnies of pleasure, to receive a caress from her dainty hand; while the dogs, great rugged brutes, even to the fiercest, crowd round her fawning, vying with each other to show how much they love her. Of her outward charms, perhaps the greatest is her glorious wreath of light wavy hair, golden in the sunshine; while her great love for the breezy moors and open skies has brought to her cheeks the signs of perfect health.

Dorothy is a brunette—but as a brother, I am afraid I cannot adequately describe her charms, though I know that Ken can be very enthusiastic on the subject. Kenneth Graham, or Ken, as he is always called, like Sheila, has light wavy hair, but

here the likeness ends, for he stands six feet in his stockings, and is in proportion to match. Keen on all outdoor games, a crack shot and a fearless horseman, he loves the open air with all the ardour of his fighting ancestors. Our friendship, commenced at school, has never waned. There he had saved my life, by lugging me unceremoniously out of the river into which I had fallen, while vainly endeavouring to recover my Sunday topper that had been knocked into midstream, and was gaily floating, just out of reach, on its way to the sea. Whatever mischief Ken was convicted of, I was generally aiding and abetting him. Many a caning have we artfully dodged, and many a one have we sorrowfully shared, ere we quitted our *alma mater* for other spheres.

Lastly myself, Roy Trevor, standing only five feet nine. I used to look quite small beside Ken. They say opposites agree, and this must be so, for unlike him, I had dark brown hair, brown eyes, and, through living under hotter skies than Scotland's, a brown, sunburnt skin. A roving disposition, coupled with a general knowledge of engineering, had been responsible for my taking to motoring, and discovering little-known beauties, roads of course, on the Continent.

For the next week, every one was busy, preparing for departure. Sheila and Dorothy collected their belongings. I was appalled at the quantity they intended to take, and politely but firmly requested them to reduce it by one-half, explaining that we should be independent of trains, and would have no

servants and heavy luggage following us. We would carry everything in the special boxes, which were being made in Paris. In support of this dictum, I related to them one of my experiences, and counselled them to take warning by the awful example. It is a painful subject, and one which I have tried to forget. In a weak moment I consented to allow a large trunk to follow me vaguely about Europe. In three months I only saw it twice. Either I did not go to the place it had been sent to, or when I did go, I found it had not arrived. I was in despair, and finally gave it up for lost, when, by the merest chance—or good luck, call it—I ran up against the wretched thing in a little wayside town. So delighted was I at the unexpected encounter that I never left its brown sides till I had seen it sealed and labelled for home, and vowed never again to take more luggage than I could carry on the car. Since then I have lived a happy and cheerful life.

The prospect of having to hunt up several trunks distributed by the lavish hands of railway officials in different parts of the Continent, was enough to wreck the tour at the outset, and bring my brown hairs in sorrow to the grave.

Leaving Graham Castle we drove the fifteen miles to the station. Here Ken took a sad and touching farewell of his favourite pair, which had covered the distance, much to his pride, in a little over an hour and a half. All the way he held forth on the beauties and advantages of horses, remarking at the finish that we had made excellent time.

"Why?" I put in. "At that speed on the car you would hardly seem to be moving."

Ken replied that it was quite quick enough for him; he would never wish to go any faster, &c. I answered nothing, only smiled that irritatingly pitying smile, exclusively reserved to the motoring public contemplating the vain ignorance of their motorless brethren.

We stayed a few days in Paris, where Sheila and Dorothy had several purchases to make; and where I insisted on every one being fitted out in full motoring garb, for tropical heat, or arctic cold. One afternoon I strolled up to Rothschild's, where I had left the car to have a proper touring body fitted, in place of the two-seater that I use when alone. Dennis, my chauffeur, was in attendance upon the car, his face screwed into a smile that rivalled the glittering lamps for brightness. Born in Ireland, of Scotch parents, Dennis is a strange mixture of Scotch and Irish. He has been in our family for the last dozen years or so, occupying the position of head-groom. When I offered to teach him to become a "shuver" he jumped at the chance, and for the last four years has accompanied me on my wanderings. A servant born, he understands his place, and can wash and clean a car in a way that has astonished many a garage man, who prides himself upon his polishing abilities. In appearance Dennis is like a jockey, and many a time has he been stopped in the streets by persons anxious for the latest tip for "to-morrow's winner." His greatest characteristic is the marvellous knack he

possesses of meeting people whom he knew, or who knew his native place of Bally-something-or-other in Ireland, and five minutes after putting up the car, in some quiet little town, far away from civilisation, I have found him chatting quietly to the only person in the whole neighbourhood who understood English, and was, of course, the first person that Dennis had accosted. I must admit that the person was generally of the opposite sex, but this might be attributed to his Irish descent. He speaks no language but his own, and how he manages in the different countries is a mystery known only to himself.

Turning from Dennis to Mercédès, I felt my heart swell with pride as I gazed upon her. What I had left after the month's trial, had been a muddy, grey two-seater; what I found now, was a long, low car, fitted with Roi des Belges body, canopy, and glass screen, painted snow-white, edged with green and gold, and upholstered in red leather. "They have made a good job of it, sir," broke in the voice of Dennis, upon my gloating. "You can hardly believe it's the same car we left——"

"Is all ready for starting?" I interrupted, for my fingers were itching to grasp the familiar levers.

"Ready, and waiting, sir," answered Dennis.

I mounted on board, and sank into the luxurious armchair behind the steering wheel. Dennis gave the starting-handle a quick turn, and the machine leapt into eager life. At the Automobile Club garage, Mercédès took up a temporary abode, and it

was there that I brought Sheila, Dorothy and Ken, at their earnest request, for, as Dorothy remarked: "They wanted to make friends with the car ere they trusted their lives to its hazardous keeping."

On the way to the garage, Ken was giving his opinion on the rights of pedestrians, and the abominable selfishness of motorists. "Nonsense," I answered, "no man will deliberately run you down; all you have to do is to keep still, and if— Look out, man, quick!" I gasped, as we jumped for the kerb, narrowly escaping a small hired car, recklessly driven by a chauffeur. Ken chuckled grimly, and asked me my views on the rights of pedestrians.

Arrived at the garage, I marshalled them before Mercédès, and with bated breath waited anxiously to hear what the verdict would be. After the first glance, Sheila turned her fine eyes upon me: "Oh Roy," she murmured, "I never expected anything like this."

"It is magnificent," assented Dorothy. "See how it stands out from all the other cars here."

Two on my side. I breathed more freely, and glanced at Ken. He was more critical. Walking round her twice he examined the coach-work, felt the upholstery, kicked the two front tyres, and generally took stock. Evidently he was impressed, for he remarked: "I will admit, for a motor, it's the best I've seen up to now. The lamps give it a bright look, and it is well painted. The armchairs in front appear exceedingly comfortable, and it has a general air of smartness." He paused, and then added: "I suppose under that coffin-shaped box in

front you keep the 'condensed horse,' as I heard an American call it yesterday."

"That is where the engine is placed," I replied with dignity. "'The murderous horse-power,' I think you called it. Open the bonnet," I said to Dennis. Ken shook his head as he gazed at the cylinders, and referred to them as "a tangled mass of iron and twisted pipes."

We made an inspection of the other cars in the garage, and came back for a last look at Mercédès. "If her behaviour is equal to her appearance we shall have a glorious time," said Dorothy.

"To-morrow you shall judge for yourself," answered I, "when we start. I have told Dennis to have the car at the hotel at nine sharp, and we'll get away as soon as possible." Bidding farewell to the car till the morrow we left the garage, to spend, as Ken put it, "our last evening as ordinary happy motorless people. Let's be merry to-day for to-morrow we—start," he added.

During dinner that evening, Sheila proposed a toast. Raising her glass on high, she asked us to drink success and good luck to the tour.

CHAPTER II

A DASH FOR THE ALPS

We had just finished breakfast, and were sitting in the lounge, when Ken strolled in. "It's at the door," he announced, in a voice of resigned hope, as though "it" might have been the proverbial wolf. "I've seen Dennis at the entrance, and he says that the thing is waiting to start."

"You'd better get ready," I said; "I'll see that everything is packed." Sheila and Dorothy disappeared, while Ken and I strolled to the door. We found Mercédès the observed of all observers, surrounded by an admiring crowd, while Dennis hovered near, like a guardian angel.

"Isn't she looking splendid?" I exclaimed to Ken, endeavouring to work up a little enthusiasm. Ken, however, was inclined to be pessimistic, and observed that one could never judge by appearances.

"Everything's ready, sir," said Dennis, interrupting. "It's quite a job to keep those imps away," he added, as he dusted off the step a small boy, who was surreptitiously endeavouring to blow the horn.

We were waiting in the hall when Sheila and

Dorothy appeared, and, accompanied by the head *concierge*, his two assistants and three luggage porters, we formed in procession, and trooped to the car. It had been arranged that Sheila and Dorothy should occupy the tonneau, while Ken sat in front with me. Dennis "wound her up," as Sheila remarked, and took his seat at Ken's feet, curling himself behind the "dash." "Allez!" I slipped in the first gear and we glided away. As we entered the busy traffic, I noticed that Ken's face wore a set expression, and he gripped the arms of his seat tightly; and by a sudden movement on the part of Dennis, as we missed another car by a decimal of an inch, I knew that my friend was undergoing the experience of all novices to motoring—that of trying to stop the car by pressing the foot hard against the floor boards, and, in this case, incidentally nipping Dennis in a tender part of his anatomy.

"How do you like it?" I asked.

"Don't you bother to talk," Ken replied; "watch your steering. Look out, man!" (Another sudden movement by Dennis.) "You only just missed that bus."

"You'll find that I shall always just miss," I assured him, "though you have to be careful," I added, bringing Mercédès to a sudden standstill, to allow a motor taxi-cab to fly across our bows.

"You soon get used to it," I continued.

"Ah, that's better," murmured Ken, as we turned down the Rue de la Paix.

Crossing the Place Vendôme I had another opportunity of showing him what control I had

over the car. We were passing the foot of the column when a child ran wildly across the square, tripped, and fell right in our path. Sheila and Dorothy cried out, and Ken leant back quickly, and evidently put his foot down rather hard, for Dennis jumped spasmodically. They did not know Mercédès; she stopped in her own length, with her two front wheels almost touching the child. A moment later a nurse-maid rushed up, and, clasping the little girl in her arms, carried her away.

On reaching the Rue de Rivoli we turned to the left, and wended our way through the everlasting stream of traffic. Gradually Ken's clutch on the arms of his seat began to slacken and his face to lose its set expression. He seemed to settle himself more easily in his seat, while what I regarded as a most favourable sign was that Dennis had ceased to start violently every time we just missed another vehicle.

"What do you think of it?" I asked over my shoulder.

"I'm beyond thinking," exclaimed Sheila. "We've been holding one another's hands ever since we started, and saying all the prayers we could remember at such short notice; but we're beginning to feel that we can breathe again."

Crossing the Place de la Bastille, we followed the Rue Daumesnil, and passing through the gates of Paris entered the beautiful Bois de Vincennes.

"This is glorious," came Dorothy's voice from the back, as I opened the throttle a little, and we

commenced to hum along. "She's wonderfully smooth," admitted Ken. For some distance we followed the Nancy road.

"Now," I said, as we rounded the bend and saw before us a perfect stretch of road, clear of traffic, and losing itself in the distance—"Now you shall feel what Mercédès can do." Silently we tore along, and by imperceptible degrees I increased the speed; the delight of motion, the fresh breeze blowing in our faces (for the wind screen was up) combined to make us feel that life was indeed worth living. I instinctively knew that Ken was catching the motor fever; no longer did he sit like a waxen image, his eyes sparkled as he gazed through his goggles, his colour heightened by the quick rush of the air, and the whole set of his figure told me that he had forgotten that but a short half-hour ago he had been a rabid motor hater.

He eagerly questioned me about the car, how it was worked, and listened with interest to my explanation of cylinders, magnetos, gears, and all the hundred and one things that go to make up the intricate working of an automobile. At last the microbe of automobilism had entered his blood, and I knew that never again would he rave against cars. His next wish would be to handle a living power, and, like the boy in the bath, he would not be happy till he got it.

France I have always looked upon as the great highway to other lands. Passing over its glorious roads so often, I never seemed to think of it as

a separate journey in itself; one long delightful rush, passing from one great town to another, the road, a never-ending ribbon, disappearing like magic beneath the bonnet. Old towns, with time-honoured battlements, and noble monuments, follow one upon the other, each last as it is left behind, the next greeted with all the pleasure of an old and welcome friend. Those long, long rows of tall and stately trees, edging the sides of interminable roads, stretching far away to where the heavens and earth seem to meet; those vineyards upon the sloping hills; those patient oxen ever following the guiding stick; those innumerable villages, peaceful and quiet, where the storm and struggle of life seem to be quite unknown; those peasants working in the fields, who stop to wave a cheery signal as we flash past. Ah, how wonderful is France, and what a memory it leaves upon the mind!

What a dim impression one had of France, when the view was limited to the narrow confines of a railway window. Paris—Biarritz—the Riviera, that was the France we knew. But with the birth of the car came knowledge greater than one ever dreamt of; places dubbed inaccessible now lie in your path; others, spoken of as uninteresting, and unworthy of note, are now immortalised by that selfsame car. Ever onward, one rushes, now tearing along a road straight as an arrow, now mounting, with unabated speed, a long and steep incline, with a hum that makes the heart rejoice, and the blood course more swiftly, as one meets the keen force of the wind; next, one is crawling through a

WHERE THE ROAD PASSES THROUGH TUNNELS BORED DEEP INTO THE ROCK
COL DES ROCHES

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village, till, with a sigh of relief, the open road is reached, and the onward rush continued.

Through Troyes, the ancient capital of Champagne, to Besançon, the city once of sieges, now of watches, on the wings of the speed-god we were carried, and the gate of Switzerland lay before us. At the French frontier we stayed long enough to obtain a passavant laboriously made out by a painfully polite official. A short and easy climb brought us to the summit of the Col de Roches, where the road passes through tunnels bored deep into the rock, and emerges before the doors of the Swiss *douane*.

I had ready the 600 frs. which I had always paid for a car entering Switzerland, and waited for the necessary papers to be made out. To my surprise the *douanier* demanded 900 frs. Explanations followed, and I was told that the custom duty had been raised 50 per cent. As ill-luck would have it, I had only English gold and notes, above the 600 frs. I had already tendered; I knew that at Neuchâtel, where we intended to spend the night, I could obtain what I wanted, but not here. I offered my English gold. Apparently the *douanier* had never seen the like before. He scrutinised the pieces, let them ring on his desk, and, with a shake of his head, returned them to me.

"Isn't there a bank anywhere near here?" asked Ken, whose temper had been steadily rising, as we watched the official gaze at the gold, with eyes of contempt. I put the question to the *douanier*.

"To be sure there is," he answered slowly. "But, alas, it is closed, to-day being Sunday, and Monsieur cannot change his money till to-morrow."

"I've an old aunt who would look upon this as a matter of Providence, punishing us for travelling on the Sabbath," said Sheila. "But what's to be done?"

"He won't let us in without the money," I answered; "and we can't stay here all night."

"Ask him what he will allow for the sovereigns," Dorothy suggested. I did so. The official sent for another man, presumably the bank manager, to come and examine them. The report being favourable, he offered 22 frs. for each sovereign; refusing, with a shudder, to touch the notes.

Ken's Scotch blood rose up in revolt; but seeing that it was the only way, I acquiesced, and we received our receipt, leaving the official chuckling.

Between Les Ponts and Neuchâtel, are two roads. One is marked with the ordinary broad red of the "Routes Nationales" on the Taride maps, the other is marked "Routes Impraticables." We chose the latter, which looked mountainous, for, as Sheila said, "as we had come to Switzerland for hills, surely we could not begin too early."

There was nothing dreadful about the road; in fact it was excellent all the way. As we reached the highest point, and passed between two large rocks there opened out one of the surprises of the tour. At our feet lay the wide expanse of Lake Neuchâtel, glittering like silver, while above it rose a perfect panorama of snowy mountains, from the

A SCENE OF SNOW AND ICE, ABOVE AND BELOW
THE JUNGFRAU

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Bernese-Oberland to Mont Blanc. The sun, a ball of blazing red behind us, cast its dying light over the scene, tipping the snow peaks with that beautiful rosy glow so peculiar to the Alps.

As we gazed silently upon the scene, grey shadows crept quickly over the snow, driving the rosy tint higher and higher, till finally for a moment, it rested only upon the summits of the highest; and then faded, leaving all grey and cold.

Plunging into the shadow of the pines the road winds down the hill till it reaches the waters, 3000 ft. below, and follows the edge of the Lake to Neuchâtel.

From Neuchâtel to Berne the road traverses a country crossed and intersected with conflicting roads, and here we were unfortunate enough to lose our way. It was later than we expected when we reached Berne, with its Gothic minster high above the rushing waters. After lunch, we followed the Aar to the busy little town of Thun beneath the fine old castle of Zähringen-Kiburg, with its glorious views of the snow. Presently the road passed along the now turbulent waters of the lake. For the weather had changed; no longer did the sun shine upon a world of peace and stillness, his face was hidden by a mass of clouds ever thickening, and shutting out the snow-views. A cold wind blew keenly across the lake, stirring its waters into angry white-tipped waves. Here the road is cut in the rocky face of the cliff, and rises high above the breaking rollers. Now and then the rock hangs far out over the road, above our heads, and again, the

road tunnels through the heart of the rock itself. Rain threatened, even as we reached Interlaken and pulled up before the hotel. As we descended from the car, the *concierge* drew our attention to the mist-clad hills across the green park. At that moment the clouds parted at one spot, and the "Maiden" stood forth lit by a stray gleam of sunshine and dazzling in a fresh dress of virgin snow; for a moment she stood forth in all her loveliness, then faded quickly away into the driving mist.

Next day summer returned; Interlaken was looking its best, albeit somewhat crowded with tourists, as was the railway which, in a few hours, transfers the traveller to the sea of ice ten thousand feet above. The journey from Scheidegg was new to us, as the latest addition to the railway now pierces the Eiger itself, and we resolved to view this latest piece of engineering skill.

At Lauterbrunnen, which the Staubbach fall chiefly reaches in the form of spray, commences the rack-and-cog-railway to Scheidegg, where electricity supplants steam, and passes to the Eiger station. Here the glacier pours down from the snow heights, amidst a scene of the wildest magnificence. The carriages were crowded, and it was with difficulty that we could at last obtain places by standing in the little *coupé* reserved to the brake-man at the commencement of the train.

But so great is the overpowering grandeur of the scene that one forgets the throng amidst nature's wonders. The Icemere station is a gallery cut in the face of the rock, through which one gazes at a

WE TOOK A LAST LOOK AT GRINDELWALD

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scene of snow and ice above and below. It is exactly like looking through an eye of the mountain into another world; a world of stillness, so intense as to be felt; of desolation, so pronounced that a great awe creeps into the soul. The cold was piercing, and we were glad to avail ourselves of the highest restaurant in Europe ere we descended. At Scheidegg we changed into the carriage bound for Grindelwald, where I had ordered Dennis to meet us with Mercédès, and where, to our joy, we found him. Thankfully we changed into the roomy car, speeding down the beautiful Lutchenthall as the first shades of evening were falling. The road runs between the railway and the rushing stream; we took a last look at Grindelwald in the distance, capped by the massive peaks of the Jungfrau, the Eiger, and the Wetterhorn. Another minute and we were passing through the defile of the Ortwird, emerging at the foot of the Schynige Platte, and presently reached our hotel.

Interlaken is a centre of beautiful excursions, and after staying some time we resumed our wanderings. It was afternoon when we started on the Meiringen road. The weather was now superb, the road good, and we soon reached the little hotel at the foot of the Reichenbach falls.

Arrived here, we found there was an hour to spare before dinner, and as the cable railway to the falls started almost from the hotel door, we decided to visit them. It was very warm and we removed our coats; a polite porter from the hotel came hurriedly forward to take them from our hands and

see us safely into the carriage, clad in the lightest of summer clothes. As we sat waiting for the thing to start, talking merrily, we little dreamed how soon our enthusiasm would be damped in more senses than one. An official took our tickets, and locked the door as a check to any suicidal tendencies that we might develop.

Half-way the line crosses the stream below the central fall, and is then hid in the trees till it reaches the summit. Here the carriage goes under a wooden and glass shelter, in which the engine-room is placed. The guard, pointing to a doorway, informed us that we must go outside if we wished to see the falls; we went outside, and he closed the door carefully behind us. Scarcely had we crossed the threshold than we were met by a blinding shower of spray, and in a few seconds completely drenched.

As we gasped for breath we gazed upon the falls —a magnificent sight, but probably better appreciated from the interior of a diving-suit. A rushing, roaring torrent seemed to come pouring in great volume almost perpendicularly above our heads; striking a ledge of rock parallel to where we stood it shot out in one superb arch of solid water, falling with the noise of continuous thunder into a chasm, whose depths were hidden by impenetrable darkness.

"We can't get any wetter. Let's follow that path and see where it goes," Ken spluttered, and we made a simultaneous rush up the slippery footway; after climbing some distance we reached a

THE ROAD OVER THE BRÜNIG PASS

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height above the spray. Luckily the sun was shining brightly, and as we gazed at one another we could hardly help laughing at our astonishing surprise. Alas! for our summer attire, our panamas and sunshades—they were sodden till they could hold no more. Continuing the climb we finally reached the summit; here the path leads to a stone stand, directly above the great fall. Retracing our steps we rushed as quickly as possible through the spray and regained the shelter of the engine-house, only to find that we must wait half an hour for the next train.

Dinner was served as we four sodden mortals trooped into the hotel, and it was not until we had had a bath and complete change into dry things that we were fit to sit down with respectable people.

Why the hotel porter, who so eagerly relieved us of our coats, refrained from warning us, I never knew; or why the officials of the fall do not hire out mackintoshes, like those of the Rhine fall at Mülhausen, I could never ascertain; all my inquiries met with a smiling shake of the head.

The road over the Brünig pass connecting Brienz with the "Lake of the four Cantons" is rather tame; but enlivened by the absurd regulations enforced against automobiles. The road from Meiringen is narrow till it joins the main highway, and follows it, ever rising, till the summit is reached, 3400 feet above the sea.

It was Sunday, and by the law, unswerving even as of the Medes and Persians, we were forbidden to

proceed. There seemed a fate which punished us for travelling on the Sabbath, and we were compelled to stay at the Brünig hotel, beautifully situated amidst the pines; where we spent a charming day.

Next morning we duly received a permit, and were solemnly warned that we must not reach Giswyl, 12 kilometres away, in less than seventy-two minutes; or in other words, must not tear over the ground at a greater speed than six miles an hour, while we might be timed at any moment and fined two hundred francs, &c. I ought here to mention that Ken's fellow-feeling for the Swiss, of which he had been so proud, was conspicuous by its absence, as we talked over the rules of the pass.

Halting often, and with ulterior motives, we passed through Giswyl with one minute in hand. A notice, startling in its peremptoriness, commanded us to halt under pain of arrest. A little woman seated sewing in a *café* by the roadside took our permit, noticing the time marked thereon, added seventy-two minutes, verified the result by a cuckoo clock, ticking loudly on a shelf, and graciously permitted us to proceed.

Pilatus, its summit for once clear of cloud, rises like a giant beside the road, and introduced Mercédès to my favourite lake of Switzerland, Lucerne, lovely both in position and contentment.

The town of Lucerne, fanning itself in the warm sunshine, almost tempted us to stay, but our hearts were hungry for the Alps. Brunnen, gazing up the lake of Uri into the vastness of the Gothard, was but a memory as it flitted past, and we followed the rocky

THE ROCKY AXENSTRASSE
LAKE OF URI

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Axenstrasse, high above Tell's Platte, unable to see the rock on to which he leapt, when escaping from the tyrant Gessler. Below us we could see the gleaming rails of the great St. Gothard railway, disappearing into tunnel after tunnel, as it followed the water's edge. A glorious spin and we slowed down to pass through Altdorf, that brave little town where the successful struggle against the tyranny of the House of Hapsburg commenced in the courage of William Tell. In the centre of the town, stands Tell's Tower, on the spot, where, tradition has it, grew the lime tree against which his son was placed. Upon the wall is painted a picture of the national hero, and before it a statue is erected, the bow and arrow being, of course, very conspicuous.

The first shades of evening were falling as we left Altdorf, little dreaming in what dramatic manner we should be called upon to enter it again. As we sped deeper and deeper into the vastnesses of the Gothard, the scenery grew wilder and more impressive. Chestnut trees gave place to hardy firs and sweet-smelling pines, and the air became fresher. The road leads ever upwards between overhanging hills, crossing and re-crossing the Reuss, winding through ever-narrowing gorges, in which it had to fight for very existence with the roaring torrent. The shadows, growing deeper and deeper, made impenetrable chasms of the black depth along whose brink we sped, from which the sound of the hurrying waters rose up like distant thunder. The heights above appeared to rise into the heavens themselves, one great unending wall of rock.

It was that mysterious time immediately before the rising of the moon, when a ghostly light distorts threatening rocks into sleeping giants and fiery demons, crouching in the shadows and waiting to pounce down and crush the daring mortals who disturb their peace and quietude.

Swiftly and without apparent effort Mercédès ate up the long gradients till we were dimly conscious of houses flying by on either side, and knew that we had reached Göschenen. Crossing an old stone bridge, high above the stream, we saw the cold mass of the glaciers dimly outlined, and awakening from our dream, discovered ourselves descending mechanically before the doors of a comfortable little hotel.

WE SPED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE VASTNESSES OF THE GOTTHARD

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CHAPTER III

THE GREAT ST. GOTHARD

FROM Göschenen I knew that a permit was necessary to cross the pass, and I forthwith proceeded to make inquiry concerning it.

On my previous journey the pass had been closed to automobiles, and I had been forced to put the car on a truck, and train it through the tunnel to Airolo on the Italian side. The pass had been opened to cars only a week before our arrival; and mine host of the hotel was brimming over with information as to where a permit could be obtained, and the sundry pains and penalties which would be our portion if we were caught on the pass without one.

The station lies at the foot of the rock on which the hotel is built, and, following instructions, I descended in search of the official who issues the permits. I found him politeness itself, and after furnishing him with my name, age, occupation and place of birth, he quickly made out the necessary paper.

"There are a few rules that you must observe," said he. "Automobiles are forbidden on the pass except between the hours of five and eight in the

morning, and seven and nine in the evening. On meeting any conveyance, you must always take the precipice edge of the road, and must, if required, silence the motor. And lastly, you must accept full responsibility for any damage or accident that may happen in consequence of your automobile's presence upon the road. Here, monsieur, is your pass, and I wish you *bon voyage.*"

Thanking him for the trouble he had taken, I returned to the hotel, and after giving Dennis a few orders, went in search of the *salle-à-manger.* The news that we were to be called next morning at half-past four was hailed as a new experience. The proprietor of the hotel solemnly assured me that anything in the form of tea or coffee could not be obtained at that hour: I therefore proposed breakfast at Hospenthal. The fresh air, coupled with the excitement, soon began to take effect, and after the coffee we retired to rest—to dream of the treat in store for us on the morrow.

I remember little after reaching my room, till I was aroused by the continuous knocking of a sleepy-eyed porter playing the devil's tattoo upon the door. The moon was still shining brightly, illuminating the room with an uncanny light as I lit the one and only candle with which I had been blessed: a wash in cold, clear water was a fitting accompaniment to the early hour, and after a prolonged hunt for my collar-stud, which had taken into its silly gold head to lose itself behind the bed, I finished dressing, and sallied out in search of Ken's room.

The landing on which I found myself was pitch

A DARK AND SOMBRE DEFILE THROUGH WHICH THE REUSS TEARS

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dark, but I groped along the wall till I reached the door, and, knocking softly, waited anxiously for a reply. I was almost instantly rewarded by a loud snore; that was *not* Ken's room, and hastily turning away, I tripped over a pair of heavy hob-nailed boots, hiding slyly in the darkness, and stumbled against the door. The snore which had reached its highest pitch, stopped suddenly, while I remained as still as possible, mentally cursing the boots as I tenderly nursed my ankle. The position was becoming strained, when, to my joy, the snore recommenced with unabated vigour. Creeping away, I ran into the arms of Ken, who had been searching diligently for me. "I thought you were a ghost," he whispered, as we tip-toed along the passage.

"Is that you, Roy?" came Sheila's voice from the darkness, and the next moment I was beside her.

As we descended the staircase the welcome sound of Mercédès smote upon our ears, and we discovered Dennis struggling with the baggage, assisted by the still sleepy-eyed porter.

The moonbeams were being slowly strangled by the pale light of breaking day, and between the great mountains, rising on either side of the valley, stretched a narrow arc of sky still dotted with innumerable stars, flashing like diamonds upon a velvet cloth. From Göschenen the road winds upwards and enters the Schöllenen, a dark and sombre defile through which the Reuss tears down its rugged bed, its path strewn with enormous boulders. The perpendicular sides of this fearsome

valley rise up sheer from the stream, devoid of all living things save where patches of moss and grass alone seem able to obtain a resting-place.

Shelley must have pictured such a scene when he wrote:

> "On every side now rose
> Rocks, which in unimaginable forms
> Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
> In the light of evening, and its precipice
> Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
> 'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning caves
> Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
> To the loud stream."

The road passes under an avalanche gallery and winds itself in short zig-zags, ever climbing amidst scattered rocks till on rounding a mass of stone, it enters the gorge spanned by "The Devil's Bridge."

A more wild and savage scene it is difficult to imagine. The gorge is narrow; the rocks rise up sheer to a great height—on one side the Reuss leaps over a precipice in one foam-enshrouded mass, falling into an abyss a hundred feet beneath the bridge, which it envelops with its spray, carried far out from the stream by furious gusts of wind which come howling down the ravine.

> "A doleful place: hemmed in with earthen precipices."

The scene is awful enough in broad daylight, but illuminated by the uncertain light of dawn was weird in the extreme.

Terrible as the scene is, more terrible still are the sights that it has looked upon. How the Imperialists being forced to retreat before the French, made

THE ROAD PASSES UNDER AN AVALANCHE GALLERY AND WINDS ITSELF IN SHORT ZIGZAGS
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their last stand upon the bridge, the charge of the French, the fierce struggle on the bridge over the boiling waters; and then the total collapse of the whole structure, and the warriors, friend and foe alike, hurled into eternity. How, unable to stem the rush of the charging host behind them, the French grenadiers left upon the edge were hurled to join their comrades below, whilst the remainder were exposed to a deadly fire from the Austrians. How, at enormous cost, the Imperialists repaired the bridge only to be defeated by Judin after his superhuman march across the Furka against almost overwhelming odds. How, for a month they held the Pass till they themselves were forced to retreat before Suwarrof, are facts in history. But one can never hope to realise the true significance of the words, till one has gazed upon the Devil's chasm and heard the thunder of the stream from which the cries of the lost souls seem to rise strangled in the howling of the wind.

The wind was shrieking down the gorge, carrying spray from the cascade and dashing it against our faces as we crossed over the bridge, and continued to rise in windings. A little fort, hardly distinguishable from the black shadows of the rocks, gazes down upon the bridge, and stopping Mercédès, we descended and walked toward it, hoping to obtain a better view. As we advanced, two dark shadows detached themselves from the blackness, and we found ourselves looking upon the cold steel of two bayonets, whilst a voice bade us return immediately to the road. It was a command to be obeyed and

we at once retraced our steps. Mounting to our seats, we plunged into a tunnel bored through the rock, and emerged, wonder of wonders, in a peaceful green valley enclosed with snow-tipped mountains.

So changed was the scene that for a moment we were speechless—a most unusual thing for Dorothy, by the way. The threatening rocks from whose clutches we had escaped, had towered so high as to exclude all the light and we had changed, in a moment, from stormy night to peaceful day. Even the Reuss no longer thundered over the rocks, but ran quietly along the valley as though its only object in life was to set an example to the world of peace and decorum. Andermatt, whose protecting pine-wood was destroyed by the French in 1799, gazes sleepily upon the quiet valley: and soon we reached Hospenthal, a picturesque village of houses snugly nestling together upon the summit of a slight hill, looking for all the world as though they were trying to keep each other warm. A little white church shares the summit with a ruined tower, the last remains of the castle of the Barons of Hospenthal.

It seemed positively out of place to pull up before the door of a good hotel after the desolation through which we had passed. A well-served breakfast speedily appeared, and disappeared with equal rapidity. "Couldn't we go over the Furka from here, and so into the Rhone valley?" asked Dorothy. "I'm afraid not," I was forced to say. "I wanted to come here that way from Meiringen

A DOLEFUL PLACE: HEMMED IN WITH EARTHEN PRECIPICES
THE DEVIL'S GORGE

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by the Grimsel, but was told it was forbidden; however, I'll inquire." Monsieur le Concierge appealed to, informed us, not without relish, that the Furka Pass was expressly "*défendu*" to automobiles, but, he added, he would place horses at our disposal.

"Never," said Sheila, "I won't desert Mercédès."

"Come now, if Dorothy really wants to see the Furka," I persuaded. Here Dorothy interrupted. "But I only want to see it from Mercédès," she said. "Besides, I wouldn't let horses drag me up these awful hills; I prefer the car."

"Madame," ejaculated the *concierge*, "madame is surely joking, it iss not possible that she prefare the automobile to the horse—the danger—the speed—alas! it iss not true."

When he really grasped the fact that Dorothy was in earnest, and that we were all of the same mind, I feel sure that he regarded us from that moment in the light of polite lunatics.

At this spot our friend the Reuss divides in two, one branch disappearing in the direction of the Furka, the other, still faithful, leading us further into the Gothard. Winding its way high above Hospenthal the road traverses a rock-strewn slope into a broad, bare valley, and still climbing, enters a more desolate region. Here the road, as though weary of ever pointing heavenwards, becomes level, and we are upon the summit, 7000 feet above sea-level.

Enormous boulders, worn smooth as though the sea for generations had dashed against their sides,

form the surface of this plateau, in whose midst sparkle, like a cluster of gems, several small lakes. The air was brilliantly clear and the sun shining brightly as we reached the old Hospitz beside the green waters, and stopped Mercédès, amidst the loud barking of several magnificent St. Bernards, who rushed out at the first sound of the motor.

As it was still early in the morning we spent the next five or six hours wandering about the summit. We visited the little lake of Lucendro, about a mile from the Hospice. Its position is very beautiful, lying as it does in a basin of snowy mountains which rise up directly from the lake, and in some places the snow covers the ground almost to the water's edge. In the still surface the surrounding hills are faithfully reflected, and the double picture of snow and sky is very charming. The Reuss is born here, leaving the lake an insignificant little streamlet, and arrives at Altdorf a very self-important river indeed.

In the largest of the lakes upon the summit we came in view of a family, some six strong, braving the altitude and enjoying (?) a bathe: even the baby in arms, strongly protesting, was dipped under the icy waters. What effect the bathe would have upon the hardy family we didn't wait to see, but continued our walk.

Beside the Hospice, now the Hotel Monte Prosa, stands an unfortunate little chapel, all that remains of the original order. Under the patronage of Saint Carlo Borromeo* it flourished for a season till an

* The patron saint of Milan.

THE ROAD TRAVERSES A ROCK-STREWN SLOPE
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avalanche destroyed it. Scarcely had it been rebuilt when the French passed by, leaving it one of the many ruins to mark the path of that fraternising army. Till lately no one seems to have had the heart to rebuild it. In the interior we found several men endeavouring to rectify the ravages that time and the hand of man had wrought.

We lunched at the little hotel on the summit and early in the afternoon commenced the descent. As we turned the first corner, we found ourselves gazing down the Val Tremola: on either side of the valley the mountains rise up to a great height, forming a series of precipices. This is the most dangerous part of the pass, exposed to frequent avalanches and snow-storms, while in winter the snow-drifts are often thirty or forty feet deep. But now little snow remained, the sunshine had long ago melted it, leaving only here and there a few small patches, lying in the shadow of the rocks where the warm beams could not penetrate. It was not this view, however, that engrossed our attention, but the road; following the course of a waterfall, it raced the stream on its headlong rush from the rocky heights. Twisting this way and that, it descended amidst rocks of granite in an unravelable knot of zigzags. To us the descent was both novel and exhilarating: it was exactly like going down a gigantic and dizzy flight of stairs as we rounded corner after corner, the road lapping back upon itself. Further down, the road stretched itself out like an angry serpent twisting into every kind of fantastic form.

Presently, beneath us, we espied a little stone bridge which we knew must be the Ponte Tremola crossing the Ticinus, where Suwarrof won his short-lived victory over the French amidst these wild rocks.

A very different scene is presented on crossing the bridge, and leaving the Val Tremola behind us, coming in view of the Val Levantina, which stretches far away into the distance, losing itself amidst the mountains that bound the horizon towards Italy. Far below, Airolo, nestling in the valley, appeared like a miniature toy village: a tiny train, engine and carriages, rushed from out the hill-side and pulled up in the toy station. A faint whistle was borne up to us, and mingled with the musical tinkle of cow bells. What little those travellers, shut up in the comfortable "Wagonlits" knew of the grandeur beneath which they had passed, or the wild beauties, of whose very existence they were ignorant.

Turn succeeded turn as the road wound its way down the hillside, and the air became warmer and warmer as the barometer rose.

Of Airolo we retain only a fleeting memory. A narrow, precipitous street, bordered by small houses, at whose doors lounged their respective families chatting and exchanging ideas; barrows of fruit, grapes, figs, and peaches: multitudes of green melons whose insides are blood-red, lay in slices to tempt the thirsty. And the people, dark-haired, dark-skinned, were typical of that country whose language they spoke.

In the ravine of the Dazio Grande the road runs,

WE ARE UPON THE SUMMIT, 7000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL
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for half a mile, through scenery almost as wild as that of the Val Tremola: and it has to struggle with the rushing streams for room to pass: at one place where the opening is only wide enough for the boiling cataract, the road, by stupendous labour, is carried on a series of arches in the side of the rock above the stream.

In ascending from Switzerland darkness had hid the wonderful spiral tunnels of the great railway, and now we were treated to a splendid view of them. High above us, upon the hillside, we heard a long-drawn whistle, and an express train came thundering along, disappearing into the dark mouth of a tunnel. A minute later the same train shot out from the mountain and passed close to our road, again disappearing into the hillside. After a similar time had elapsed, as before, we saw the train rush out beneath us in the valley, and with another triumphant whistle continue its rapid descent.

Again, in the valley we were rapidly descending, the pines grew fewer and fewer till finally they yielded place to bushy chestnuts and walnut-trees. On every hand the vegetation was in the utmost profusion. A little way above Giornico the road traverses the field of battle where the ingenuity of the Swiss helped them to conquer the forces of the Milanese in 1478.

Glancing back we caught a last glimpse of the Gothard, surrounded by thick mists, with only the highest summits visible and seeming to float in the sky upon a fairy cloud. A turn of the valley shut out the view and brought us to Bellinzona, the key

to Switzerland, and the scene of many stirring events. Nor do its ruined castles and ancient walls proclaim an empty boast, for Bellinzona has suffered in every contest in which Switzerland has been involved. In olden times the Alps only offered a door to the masses of savages who poured into Italy; even the French in their passage pillaged and made desolate, leaving behind them ruin and destruction, as was their wont when preaching the glories of a republic.

On through a district of the richest vegetation we passed, the dust rising in clouds behind us. Entering Locarno as the night was closing in, we drove to an hotel upon the quiet waters of Lake Maggiore.

Upon an automobile there is seldom a tendency to talk, every one is too full of their own thoughts: one is brought so closely in touch with nature herself that words are but a poor medium by which to express the thoughts that fill one. It is usually in a silence broken only by the sound of the car that one is borne onwards—hour after hour—drinking in eagerly each new scene and experience, while a remark is out of place, and brings one to earth with startling suddenness. What makes automobilists so tired at night is the constant work upon the mind; the everchanging scenes, the small dangers of the road avoided, and the fresh air, which all devour the vitality far quicker than physical exertion.

To-day we had been even quieter than was our wont, and it was only during dinner that we commenced to compare our impressions.

WE REACHED THE OLD HOSPICE AND STOPPED MERCÉDÈS

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"I used to think I knew Europe," began Ken, "but I'm beginning to find out that I only knew fragments of it—only the towns and places we stayed at and, may be, a few miles of their surroundings. The journeys from one centre to another were exactly similar: ever the same stuffy train, rushing across unnoticed country, and it was for the journey's end and a warm bath that one longed. Now it's for the journey itself. Horses, I am ashamed to say, are too slow for long journeys. No; there's only one way to enjoy travelling, and that's by automobile—Mercédès preferred."

"Do you ever realise what an ardent anti-motorist you once were?" slyly remarked Dorothy.

"I do," replied Ken, generously, "and I feel thoroughly ashamed of the things I've said. In the future you can put me down as a fervent convert."

"The 'murderous horse-power' is not so very dreadful," I murmured.

"To-day has proved that," said Sheila,—and we fell to discussing the wonders of the Gothard.

CHAPTER IV

OVER THE SIMPLON TO THE MATTERHORN

ABOVE Locarno stands the pilgrimage church of Madonna del Sasso. Instead of toiling under a burning sun, wearily up the steep hill, the pilgrim can now avail himself of modern ingenuity and lazily make his *devoir* by the help of a cable-railway. From the summit a beautiful panorama is spread before the eye. Upon a high bare rock the church shares with a monastery the whole summit, its walls built upon the very edge. Beneath it lies the shining expanse of Lago Maggiore, from which the mountains rise into a brilliant sky of blue, and are covered in the utmost profusion with vineyards and fig-trees.

We wandered along the steep path leading to the monastery and entered the church. The effect is startling after the intense light. A noble Latin psalm echoed through the building, rising in majestic volume from the throats of unseen singers. From the cool floor to the low roof the interior is one confused mass of decoration—sacred pictures, silver and gold hearts, flags, and red lamps, while innumerable candles burn upon the altars. With

WE COMMENCED THE DESCENT
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the chant of men's voices still ringing in our ears, we passed out through the curtained door of that quaint little church into the dazzling sunshine.

From Locarno to Pallanza the road follows the beautiful edge of the lake and crosses the Swiss-Italian frontier. The Swiss were most businesslike, and on explaining that we should sleep in Switzerland that night they at once wrote out a pass, thus saving the tedious process of returning for so short a time the 900 francs deposit. At the Italian frontier we were not so fortunate, the official refusing to allow us to enter, though we assured him it was only for three short hours ere we regained Switzerland and left his country at the Simplon Pass. "No," he said, "it is necessary to deposit 600 francs before you can enter." "I hope the beggar will take his own notes," I murmured, as I handed him the amount in Italian paper. The fellow wouldn't, and insisted on gold—"pure gold," he said, smacking his lips. "I am a member of the T.C.I. and R.A.C.," I argued.

"Have you not the special permits issued by those clubs?" he asked. I had not, for I had neglected to obtain them, and this want of foresight was destined to cost me dear. A brilliant idea occurred to me, and putting it into play, I begged him to take the notes for a trifling commission on the exchange: No sooner said than done, and while the receipts were being made out, a soldier slowly affixed a leaden seal to Mercédès.

Still following the lake we passed several little

islands lying close to the shore, the overbearing heat being tempered by a breeze caused by our speed.

Pallanza, its white villas shining like gems amidst the green foliage, gazes into the snow-capped hills of the Simplon. "Do let's stop and buy some fruit," begged Sheila, who was sitting at my side, as we passed through the market-place. Halting Mercédès we descended *en masse* and wandered amongst the stalls which groaned beneath their burdens; bunches of grapes, many still clinging to the torn branches, luscious peaches, figs, pomegranates and melons, a plethora of melons: for a few lira we had an unlimited choice and returned to the car overwhelmed by our purchases; we had literally to fight our way through the merry crowd who surrounded Mercédès, and followed Ken, like a covey of merchantmen in the wake of a ship of the line. Dennis we found fully occupied; his whole time, and a bit more, being divided between keeping off the crowd whom he was addressing in no very complimentary terms, luckily in his own language, and endeavouring to persuade the junior members of the community that his highly polished lamps were to be seen and not fingered. Dennis started the engine; but the crowd only pressed closer and smiled at the horn. Thereupon I opened the throttle, and put my foot upon the cut-out. The effect was startling, and as far as we were concerned highly satisfactory. Before the laughing crowd, tumbling over one another in their hurry to get away from our broadside, had recovered the shock, we were through them and out of the market-square.

AN UNRAVELLABLE KNOT OF ZIGZAGS
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At Pallanza the Simplon road leaves the lake and passes the quarries of Mont Orfano, whose marble furnished the pillars of the Milan Cathedral; following a flat valley bordered by lofty and well-wooded hills it passes through the old Etruscan town of Domo d'Ossola, a maze of narrow streets and low roofs almost Andalusian in appearance. The road now leaves the broad valley; turning sharp to the left, it mounts a quick rise and commences to climb the Simplon Pass. As it penetrates further into the hills, the scenery becomes grander and the pines descend to greet us. At Iselle, the Italian custom house, we were informed by an official that he could not refund the 600 frs. we had deposited three hours before as he had no money, and was not sure when more would arrive. After some talk he finally wrote out an order on a bank at Brigue, and giving it to us hoped we should be able to obtain the money.

At Iselle the railway, whose shining rails we had been following, disappeared into a hole in the rock on its twelve miles of darkness to Brigue. Climbing, we followed up the Frassinone which tears along its rugged bed on its way to the hot plains of Italy from its home in the snow; the valley grows narrower and narrower till the two sides almost touch. At this point nestles Gonda in a land of precipices, guarding the doorway of the famous gorges, already deep in shadow. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the few houses huddled together. The Swiss *douane* which is situated here, accepted the pass without trouble, and we were

about to proceed when an official came running out of one of the houses and held up his hand.

He was grievously sorry, he said, "but autos were not allowed on the Simplon, except between the hours of ten and three: therefore——" he ended the sentence with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

"We shall have to stay here, then—is there any hotel?" I asked, turning to the official.

"Truly," he answered, "and Monsieur stands before it."

This sounded ominous. The sun had long ceased to penetrate into the depths of the gorge, and a cold biting wind was sweeping mercilessly down the defile, making one feel the close proximity of the glaciers. In the valley the sun would still be shining, but gloom had already marked this spot as its own.

The hotel, though very small, was spotlessly clean, and the proprietor, catching us at a disadvantage, charged us accordingly. For Mercédès there was no shelter: she stood all night beneath the shadow of the little *douane*, the wind whistling dismally round her white form. Meanwhile the small girl, who combined the offices of waitress, housemaid, porter, and cook, was despatched post-haste into the hen-roost in search of the plumpest fowl that she could lay her hands on. Our bedrooms faced a splendid waterfall whose incessant roar was in keeping with its surroundings, and instead of keeping us awake as we expected, acted the opiate with success.

We were up betimes next morning; dressing

THE DESCENT WAS BOTH NOVEL AND EXHILARATING
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quickly to the sound of the tumbling waters, I strolled out before breakfast, in search of the official who issues the necessary permit. As I passed the *douane* I found Dennis restoring Mercédès' circulation, and, incidentally, his own, by a vigorous attack upon the lamps. The official had but newly risen and I discovered him in a state of deshabille; on learning my mission, he hastily donned an official jacket of roomy proportions, and producing a gold-braided hat placed it conspicuously upon the small table before him. These preparations completed, he was ready for business. A few details about the car, coupled with my name, address, and the time of issue, were all that was necessary, and with a warning that we must not occupy less than four hours between here and Brigue, he bowed me politely out.

The day was still young as we left the tiny hostelry, and entered the magnificent gorges of Gonda. The heart of the mountains seems in this spot to have been split open just sufficient to allow the noisy Dovedro and the road room for existence. The narrow valley is very fine, the mountains rising sheer to a great height. At one place further passage appears impossible, the ravine narrowing till its two sides almost touch, and between them the stream fights fiercely for very life. The road is continued by means of a gallery 600 feet long cut through the solid rock, and is one of the finest pieces of engineering skill upon the pass. By the mouth of the tunnel pours the waterfall of the Frassinone, which rushes beneath a single-span bridge, carrying the

road, and leaps 100 feet into the foaming cataract of the Dovedro. The whole scene is of the most impressive and beautiful character. As Brockedon says, it is "a spot unrivalled in its astonishing effect."

As we rush through the tunnel the sound of the engine is magnified ten times and we catch but a momentary glimpse of the words "Aero Italo, 1805," cut deep in the rock; a moment later we are in the sunshine and speeding like an arrow up the long rise. As the gorges open into a broad valley the road takes a turn back upon itself and mounts more rapidly. Once round the bend Mercédès was able to exert her full power, and hurled herself at the steep road with a long, musical hum. Mounting higher we obtained a glorious view of the gorges now lying beneath us, their tortuous course clearly shown, their threatening rocks illuminated by the sun. Simplon village, surrounded by green pastures, disappeared beneath us, and on turning a corner, the road passes through the havoc wrought by the glaciers.

Once this had been a peaceful green valley—a little village had nestled amidst the alpine roses 'neath the snowy peaks, and at the foot of the Rossboden Glacier. One day in the winter of 1901 when, praise be to Heaven, the devout inhabitants had quitted their homes for a lower altitude during the winter, that same glacier suddenly burst. Without the slightest warning the whole ground commenced to move, and with a roar more deafening than the loudest thunder, it hurled millions of tons of rock upon the doomed village, and converted the quiet

WHERE SUWARROF WON HIS SHORT-LIVED VICTORY
THE PONTE TREMOLA

valley into a scene of the wildest desolation. Of the village only one house escaped; standing to the left it was out of the path of the avalanche and is to be seen there to-day. Everywhere else, as far as the eye can see, is a mass of tumbled rock and gigantic boulders, over which a silence reigns. A way for the road is cut through the enormous *débris*, while high above tower the green pinnacles of the glacier as it gazes tranquilly upon the destruction it has caused; perhaps, who knows? meditating another rush into the already devastated valley.

Very different is the scene which the road now traverses, climbing upon one side up a long green valley: to the left appeared the old Hospitz, a solitary square building, once the only place of refuge upon the pass. The old building, long since given over to the use of goatherds, still holds a romantic memory by reason of those who once lived and died within its decaying walls. Here a few monks, brothers of the devoted heroes of the St. Bernard, spent their lonely lives—ah, and sacrificed them willingly to save those of storm-bound wanderers, lost in the snow. Upon the summit of the pass stands the new Hospice, a large plain building, very resolute and very firm, like its founder Napoleon, who made the road. At the doors of the Hospice a score of Great St. Bernards romped, and catching sight of Mercédès came bounding to meet her. The surroundings of the Hospice are particularly magnificent. The building lies beneath the appropriately named Kaltwasser Glacier, while around tower many dazzling peaks of snow. A

little further along the summit, looking towards the Rhone valley, stands the Hotel Bellevue, in whose hospitality we were not disappointed. From the hotel windows, an endless panorama of glaciers can be seen.

The summit of the Simplon is an ideal place upon which to rest; without stirring from the hotel the visitor can enjoy exquisite views, on every hand one is gazing at snow. Glaciers without number stream down towards the firs, and the air is like nectar, fresh and invigorating. Upon the surrounding hills we wandered, searching for Edelweiss, the favourite of the Alps, and obtaining it without difficulty. Once or twice we visited the little chapel of the Hospice before breakfast, and sitting in its quaint wooden seats listened to the service. As it progressed the little building became filled with many tidily-dressed men and women, the crofters from the small cottages around. Each had his or her string of beads, and each listened reverently to the service. A simpler and more impressive scene it is impossible to imagine than that small congregation of peasants, living their lonely lives beneath the everlasting snow, in touch with nature at her best and sweetest, gathered together in prayer; but in the chapel I could not see one of the many tourists who use the Hospice as a free hotel. After the service we would wander back, across the springy ground covered with alpine flora, and enjoy our breakfast in full view of the glaciers.

Amidst these delightful scenes the days all too quickly pass, and we were surprised when we

IN THE RAVINE OF THE DAZIO GRANDE
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realised the time that had elapsed since our arrival on the summit.

We had determined to make for Austria from the Simplon, which would mean returning to Domo d'Ossola and crossing north Italy. Before doing so we determined to renew our acquaintance with Zermatt, especially as Sheila had never visited its beauties before.

We left the summit one afternoon after lunch and commenced to descend the 4400 feet to the Rhone Valley. The road clings to the mountain-side, running beneath two avalanche galleries over which the streams from the glacier pour. Like the ascent on the Italian side the road to Brigue is easy and well made. Quickly losing itself in the pines, it passes through Bérisal, and soon after comes into view of Brigue lying far beneath. Ever in sight of the town, the road now descends so rapidly that one almost fancies the valley is rising to meet one.

At Brigue our permit was demanded and surrendered, and we were free to journey down the hot though beautiful Rhone Valley to Visp. Here we were forced to abandon Mercédès, which, with Dennis, remained at the hotel, while we, no longer lords of the road, but ordinary mortals, were shut up in the shaking carriage of a hard-worked train. The valley leading to Zermatt is very fine, passing many pleasing views and opening out several fine peaks. It was evening when the train reached Zermatt, and the Matterhorn was wreathed in mist; changing into an electric cog railway we were slowly carried up the 4000 feet to the Riffelalp

Hotel. Next morning the sky was innocent of clouds, and from our bedroom windows we had an uninterrupted view of the superb Matterhorn rising like a giant from its glacier bed. The week we spent here was as enjoyable as the weather was brilliant, and the night we remained upon the Gorner Grat, 10,300 feet above the sea, never to be forgotten; the sunrise upon Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn is beyond description.

AT THIS POINT NESTLES GONDA IN A LAND OF PRECIPICES
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CHAPTER V

THE HIGHEST PASS IN EUROPE

FROM Visp we returned to Brigue, obtained another permit and climbed swiftly to the summit; we did not stop at the hotel, but with a wave of the hand to our friends in the doorway, swept past: the next moment the Hospice lay above us and we were dropping down the long descent over the fallen avalanche into the gorges of Gonda. The Swiss returned, without delay, the 900 frs. and we reluctantly bid *au revoir* to that model little republic.

As we had arranged to return to Italy I did not cash the order for the deposit at Brigue, but determined to exchange it for our original papers at the Italian *douane*. The official was quite willing, though Ken afterwards declared he saw a nasty twinkle in his eyes as he handed me only one of the two papers I had surrendered to him. On my remonstrating that two were necessary, he refused to part with the other, assuring me that the one I held was all that was necessary. "If we did not like to accept this, we could deposit a further 600 frs.," he added. I knew that custom formalities often varied, so naturally concluded that he spoke

the truth, and took in all good faith the paper he offered. Passing through Domo d'Ossola we were again gasping in the heat and dust of the valley, though to make a breeze I opened the throttle fairly wide and we flew over the long straight road. Even the air blowing against us came like a warm blast, suffering in comparison with the fresh breezes of the Simplon.

Suddenly one of the back tyres exploded with a prodigious bang. It was our first experience of tyre troubles since leaving Paris. Sheila and Dorothy screamed; and Ken exclaimed excitedly: "What's that?" "It's only a tyre," I explained laughing, as I drew Mercédès to the side of the road and halted her beneath a shady tree. "I thought it was an 8-inch gun fired under my left ear," smiled Ken. "I felt sure it was brigands," Dorothy admitted; "will it take long to mend?"

"You shall see how Dennis and I manage when alone," I answered, "especially when we're in a hurry," for I rather prided myself as a wielder of the iron levers. While I was speaking, Dennis had been busy jacking up the car and unstrapping a new cover (we always carried at least four spare ones and many inner tubes). In ten minutes we had the new tyre fitted and then came the tedious occupation of pumping it up to the red line on the gauge at 100. Unjacking the car and strapping up the tools, &c., we were ready to proceed. Sheila and Dorothy, who had been interested spectators, seemed sorry when the operation was over, a sentiment unshared either by Dennis or myself.

THE MOUNTAINS RISING SHEER TO A GREAT HEIGHT
THE GORGES OF GONDA

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At Cuzzago we left the Simplon road and travelled to the right through a small valley to Omegna, a typical Italian village upon the north end of Lago Cusio, or Orta, as it is more often called. Though Orta is the smallest of the lakes it is very beautiful and its charms are too little appreciated. Orta, the town itself, stands upon a hilly promontory, jutting far out into the lake; this was our destination for the night, and we left the main road which leads to Novara and Milan, and followed a narrow path belonging to the hotel—so narrow was the path that the hedges on either side swept against Mercédès, and we earnestly prayed we should meet no other conveyance.

The road ended in a stable-yard belonging to the hotel, a building some ninety feet directly above, up to which a narrow path leads: instead of warning us to leave the car there and walk, two stable-men, standing at a coach-house door, waved their hands affectionately up the hill and cried "Avanti." Before we quite realised it we were mounting upwards; the hill, though steep, was nothing, but a sharp hair-pin turn half-way brought us to a standstill. Here we stuck, the two ends of Mercédès almost touching either side of the road. Every visitor staying in the hotel and an army of servants came out to watch the fun, and under the eyes of a fair-sized crowd, we backed and filled the few inches between the ditch and a drop of fifty feet; after a series of contortions I screwed her round, and with a triumphant roar, she shot up the rest of the hill like a rocket. The *concierge* apologised for the

path, informing us that it was not usual for an automobile to come further than the stables; and that a new road was soon to replace the narrow path. Leaving the ladies and Ken to engage rooms, I turned Mercédès, to the consternation of several visitors, amidst the maze of tea-tables, and slid back to the stables.

The hotel commanded a beautiful view. Beneath, out of the still waters, rises the exquisite little island, San Giulio, its white houses and still whiter church glistening in the sunshine and, as Sheila said, "looking for all the world as though they were afraid of wetting their feet." From the edge of the lake rise hills beautifully wooded, and beyond them more hills of a purple shade, and towering high above them the everlasting snows from which we had descended.

On the way to Como the road passes four lakes, Orta, Maggiore, Varese and Como, and as far as Sesto Calende, at the extreme south end of Maggiore, is good; after which it degenerates into a series of small lanes, narrow but fairly good to Varese, a town lying in full view of the distant snow peaks which stretch unbroken from Monte Viso to Monte Leone, while the great mass of Monte Rosa rises like a giant amongst them: the country-side is dotted with farmhouses and bell-towers, which add greatly to the quiet beauty of the lake.

The eighteen miles between Varese and Como seemed longer than any ordinary day's journey. Soon after quitting Varese the road dissolves itself into a maze of cart-tracks with deep ruts, and winds

THE WHOLE SCENE IS OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE AND BEAUTIFUL CHARACTER

THE GORGES OF GONDA

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through interminable fields of Indian corn. After we had slowly bumped along for some distance the conclusion that we were absolutely and undoubtedly lost forced itself upon our minds, and at last I stopped the car and endeavoured to find our position on the map. The heat was unbearable, and a crowd of buzzing, biting insects hummed round our heads. Sheila and Dorothy donned their heavy mushrooms, while Ken and I smoked furiously to keep off the wretched flies. Dennis, who is a non-smoker, had to bear the brunt of the attack, and declared he was being slowly eaten, till in desperation he rubbed his face and hands with paraffin. When he had performed these ablutions to his satisfaction he informed us that what was left of him was being avoided by the mosquitoes, though he smelt like a broken lamp.

After a study of the map we could not determine our position within a ten-mile radius. Dennis climbed on to the canopy to take a survey, and reported that, as far as he could see, the whole country was covered with Indian corn, and not a house or break in it, in view. The air was terribly oppressive, and we seemed to be stewing in the ante-chamber of the infernal regions.

We argued and killed flies till we were nearly roasted.

"For goodness' sake *do* let's try and get out of this," said Dorothy, "or I think I shall go mad."

"It can't last for ever," Sheila added.

"There's nothing else to do but crawl along till we get away from this confounded growth," I acquiesced. Ken said nothing, but brought the

map down on an unfortunate mosquito as it was settling on Dennis's head. Ken has a heavy hand, and it took Dennis some time to extricate the remains of that fly from his hair.

Meanwhile we had started and were jolting slowly along. I think it is about the most exasperating thing in the world to sit in a powerful car and crawl at six miles an hour along a rutty lane, completely shut in by towering hedges; while the sun blazes down and blisters the paint. It was quite an hour after we started till the fields of Indian corn began to disappear, and we reached more open country. Innumerable cross-roads confused us, while signboards appeared unknown. Our only hope lay in asking the way of people we happened to meet, and many and varied were the answers received. At one cross-road I stopped to inquire of an old wizened man, wheeling a barrow, the road to Como. "To the right, Signore," he answered. At that moment another and younger man, carrying a large yellow melon, passed on the other side: on being hailed by Ken, he replied unhesitatingly: "To the left, Signore." Ken turned to me: "Tell the old gentleman with the barrow that this man says it's to the left," he said. Unfortunately I did so, and as a result the old man immediately commenced to argue with the young man across the car. He of the yellow melon was not slow to take up the cudgels; dropping his load he waved his two hands wildly and poured out a string of Italian too quickly for me to follow. The old gentleman, despite his apparent years, was

A WAY FOR THE ROAD IS CUT THROUGH THE ENORMOUS DÉBRIS

THE SIMPLON PASS

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not to be outdone; leaving the barrow standing in the road, he worked his arms like a semaphore and returned the compliment. Several men and women strolled up, and taking sides, joined loudly in the confab. Presently they varied their arguments with abuse and tried to drown each other's voices by shouting.

"Go by the majority," Sheila cried, trying to make her voice heard above the din. I nodded to show I heard. On my side I counted three men, two women and five children. Ken had two men, four women, and three dogs on his.

"The old gentleman has it," I announced, and pressing down the accelerator, we slipped from between the contending parties. As we rounded the bend we caught a last glimpse of the dispute we had originated: the two sides, obviously careless of our departure, were shaking their fingers under each other's noses, and gesticulating wildly.

The old gentleman proved correct, for presently we came upon a main road which ultimately reached Como, descending the long hill into the town. Following the cobble-laid streets, we passed the cathedral, that beautiful combination of Gothic and Renaissance, of which the people of Como are so justly proud—for did not their ancestors impoverish themselves to finish the good work? Como was crowded, so we stayed at the Villa d' Este, whose grounds extend along the edge of the still lake.

The sun was dispelling the mists from off the water as we left Cernobbio next morning, on our way to Austria, by the famous Stelvio pass. Como

was beginning to awake to the bustle of a busy day as Mercédès disturbed its quiet streets. A quick run amidst the vines brought us to the other leg of the lake, and Lecco, a vision of white villas, spreading themselves upon a hillside from the water's edge till they were lost amidst the olive-groves. From Lecco the road follows along the edge of the Larian goddess, that queen of all the lakes where the hills rise from its green depths into a brilliant sky and are covered with almost tropical vegetation. Sometimes the road is cut in a series of tunnels through the rock only to emerge from the cool shade into the dazzling sunshine.

A little way after passing through Dorio, upon the opposite side of the lake, is faintly seen the small promontory of Musso, connected so closely with the once dreaded name of Giacomo de Medici; or Il Medeghino as he was better known, who, as Symons says: "Turned the lovely lake into a pirates' stronghold, and stained its clear waters with the slaughter of conflicting navies." His history is interesting as typical of Italy in the Middle Ages.

The north end of Lake Como becomes grander the nearer one gets to it. The mountains close in and encircle the lake like a great basin opening at one place to admit the road into the Val Tellina.

The Val Tellina is perhaps the most beautiful and unfortunate of valleys; pillaged alike by friend and foe, by church and state, ravaged by every war for centuries, and the scene of that fearful massacre of July 20, 1620, "an event," says Brockedon, "which

THE OLD HOSPICE STILL HOLDS A ROMANTIC MEMORY
THE SIMPLON PASS

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has no parallel but in the dreadful events of the *fête* of St. Bartholomew in France." The appearance of the valley gives little idea of those dark deeds except for the many ruined castles of the great families of the Pallavicini and Visconti, whose forebears were the wardens of the road to Austria. There is nothing to remind the passer-by

> "Of old, unhappy far-off things and battles long ago."

On all sides are signs of prosperity and peace, miles upon miles of vines clinging to the edge of the hills, while the valley itself is one long dream of beauty. Green figs hang temptingly from greener boughs, melons and tomato-plants grow wild amidst the hedges, and through groves of olive and pomegranate-trees flow the emerald waters of the Adda. Yet this fair land holds in its grasp the Gate of Italy, a gate through which a never-ending stream of warriors has passed, following the lead of the Roman legions, driving all before them till they themselves were thrust back from the Alps. Each succeeding army, victorious or conquered, has ruthlessly crushed the valley and its people beneath its feet, leaving behind it desolation, and a memory of cruel oppression and wrong.

Sondrio lies at the foot of the hill of Sassella, on whose slopes grows that well-known vine; high upon the hills to the left, beneath a ruined castle, rests Teglio, the quaint old village which gives its name to the valley. Upon the opposite hills a road leads over the easy and beautiful Aprica Pass, winding its way into Southern Tirol. Madonna de

Tirano, with its picturesque pilgrimage-church, stands guarding the road that here commences its climb over the rugged Bernina Pass into the Engadine, forbidden to automobiles. Crossing the Poschiavino, descending from the Bernina snowfields, we reached Tirano, halting at a chemist's shop to take in a full supply of benzine. After Tirano the valley begins to contract, but as far as Bolladore the vegetation is still luxurious; after that it enters the long defile connecting the Val Tellina with "il freddo paese," the cold region; soon the vines vanish and chestnuts take their place upon the slopes, but once in "il freddo paese," only the hardy larch and pine can brave the icy winds. Through Bormio, a dark little town of many towers, the road winds upwards to the Baths of Bormio, where a large modern hotel seems out of place amidst the wildness of its surroundings.

Although the pass is open to cars at all hours, I determined to leave next morning as early as possible—soon after six o'clock, immediately before the first five-horse coach started—partly to have the road free from traffic, and partly to enjoy the sunrise; that time of day when the air is purer and fresher than at any other, and the earth is waking refreshed from its night's slumbers. Many tales of the dangers of the pass were poured into our ears by the drivers of the diligences and carriages with whom we spoke, and who seemed to take an unholy delight in raking up memories of accidents and incidents of the road. There were innumerable sharp turns round dangerous precipices, "too sharp for

THE ROAD CLINGS TO THE MOUNTAIN SIDE
THE SIMPLON PASS

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your automobile," they added, comfortingly, and the passage through sombre ravines. Our invariable reply always was, that "where a horse can drag a carriage, there can Mercédès carry us in safety and comfort."

Strange that the Stelvio should be so little mentioned in Alpine literature. Brockedon, in his "Passes of the Alps," 1828, seems to be the only author who adequately describes its charms. A few passages from his account are well worth quoting:

"The summit of this extraordinary pass is the highest in the world which has been made traversable for carriages, it is 780 ft. higher than the estimated line of perpetual snow in the latitude of the Stelvio . . . the road leads down through a ravine deep and appalling . . . the magnificent mountain of the Ortler-Spitz opens suddenly to the view of the traveller with a vast and appalling effect, as it is seen from its extreme summit to its base, robed in everlasting snows, which descend on its sides in enormous glaciers, and stream into the valley below the road. Immense masses of rock, in themselves mountains, throw out their black and scathed forms, in striking contrast to the brightness of the glaciers which they separate . . . the whole ascent is without a parallel in Alpine scenery . . . The road winds round the side of the deep ravine into which the glaciers sink, but so near to them, that, in passing, a stone may, with little effort, be thrown upon them . . . the glacier is so immediately opposite and beneath the road that travellers can examine at ease this wonderful production of the Alps . . . is inconceivably grand . . . surrounded by pinnacled rocks of extremely savage nature . . . that which was formerly one of the most dangerous passages of the Alps is now rendered secure by galleries, either cut through projecting rocks, or constructed in masonry; these guard the traveller from the avalanches which fall from the mountains across the path, or protect him from the precipices which skirt the road through this fearful passage . . . the passage is bounded by rocks and mountains of the wildest aspect,

and a way out of the gorge is not apparent, until a sudden turning to the left opens to the view a means of escape."

There are a few accounts of it in the Middle Ages. No doubt the passage was used by the conquering armies of Rome as they swept northward. The road described by Brockedon was constructed in 1820 by the Austrians, who, like Napoleon, felt the necessity of being in military communication with their possessions in Italy. That wild and mountainous race, the Grisons, resisting both force and bribery, refused permission to allow the road to pass through a portion of their territory, and compelled the Austrians to carry it a thousand feet higher than would otherwise have been necessary.

The Duchy of Milan had, in 1814, been ceded to Austria, through the treachery of Prince Eugène, and it was over the Stelvio road that she poured her armies to subdue the continual and justifiable revolts of her Italian subjects (?); to hunt down Garibaldi, and put a stop to his indomitable spirit infesting his countrymen, teaching them to rise against their oppressors. As all the world knows, it was a task far beyond them, and in 1859 their own troops were forced to retreat before the spirit of freedom that even the Pope and Bomba had failed to crush; the victorious Piedmontese, with their then allies the French, drove them headlong back over the road they themselves had made. From then till 1870 the road was little used. In the latter year its value as a means of civil com-

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munication was recognised, and it was repaired and reconstructed for traffic once more.

Early next morning, when the warm sunbeams were driving the dark shadows one by one before them and tipping with gold the highest summits, Mercédès was panting at the door, eager for her journey to the glaciers. Taking the gradient at a fairly high speed, we were brought almost to a stop in rounding the first turn from which the ascent proper commences.

Passing through a rocky tunnel the road climbs quickly, and enters the Wormser Loch, "that ravine deep and appalling," where it is sheltered for nearly 3000 feet by a series of avalanche galleries, very welcome, for here the road is cut in the side of an avalanche-swept precipice. By means of zigzags, many too sharp to allow of Mercédès turning, except by backing and filling, the road climbs tortuously out of the ravine and passes through a district, desolation itself. All signs of life had now vanished, the stumpy pines and even the tangled grass were left far below and the road passed through rocks, bare barren rocks fashioned by a master's hand into every conceivable shape, the naked hills rising up on every side "pinnacled rocks of extremely savage nature."

When we had reached an altitude, as our barometer showed, of some 8000 feet, we came in view of the lonely Cantoniera Santa Maria, the highest permanently inhabited hostelry in Europe, and the seat of the Italian *douane*. Leaving Mercédès purring at the door, I wandered inside in search of

the official, and also our long-lost 600 frs. deposit. I found him seated in a bare, stone, comfortless room, and produced the paper returned to me at Iselle.

"Where is the other paper?" inquired the official, eyeing me with quick suspicion.

"What paper?" I asked, a sudden doubt entering my mind.

"The other one you received on entering Italy," he replied, "without which I cannot return your deposit."

I explained precisely how it happened, and how the official at Iselle had returned to me only the one paper I tendered, assuring me solemnly that it was all-sufficient.

"If what you say is true, Signore," replied the official, "I am sorry for you: without the other receipt I dare not return to you a single lira,"—he did not add what an awful ass I must have been to be so completely fooled: but I felt a bigger one than even he could imagine me. I thought for a moment, and then asked: "Will you write upon the margin of the one paper returned to me that we have left Italy upon this date without our deposit?"

"Certainly, with pleasure," he courteously answered, and did so, upon the margin, returning the paper, with the sincere hope that I should eventually obtain back the 600 frs. I sincerely hoped so too, or some one would hear about it, and as for that official at Iselle—an Italian shrug of the shoulder seemed the only ending to that sentence.

RUNNING BENEATH AVALANCHE GALLERIES
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We bade good-bye to the lonely little house, lost amidst the rocks, and continued the ascent. In a moment all our petty troubles were forgotten in the silent contemplation of the scenes through which we were being swiftly carried. It would be impossible to describe the awful desolation that lay around us, neither pen nor photo could ever reveal a thousandth part of the wildness and magnificence of the scene. Above and beneath us, the road writhed like a serpent in agony, amidst the rocks; overhead the snow-line, into which the mountains rose, appeared to be falling. On rounding the last turn we reached a tiny plateau: at the foot, or, as it seemed, upon a gleaming glacier, stood a small, white house at whose door the road suddenly disappeared. Around and about rose a towering mass of snowy peaks and streaming glaciers.

This was the summit of the Stelvio, the meeting-place of the three frontiers, 9200 feet above the sea, and the highest carriage road in Europe. We had completed the ascent long before most people had finished their breakfast, or even thought of beginning it for that matter. A stone pillar marks the highest point of the Pass; on one side of it is cut the following inscription: "Territorio Tirolese." on the other: "Territorio Lombardo," while on the front is carved: "Confine 1828. 2814 metres above the sea."

From the door of the hotel a startling scene is presented on looking down the descent towards Austria. Imagine a world of rock split as though by a gigantic wedge, forming a valley, whose sloping

sides rise from a silvery stream into the glaciers. Down one side the road is cut, in a series of bewildering zigzags; backwards and forwards it twists, and the sun reflected from its white surface gives one the impression that a flash of forked lightning is playing up and down the mountain side. At the extremity of the road as far as the eye can reach, is a little pin-point of houses, Franzenshöhe, the Austrian *douane*. This is but one-fourth of the whole descent, the road here disappearing into the pines.

From where we stood, only a portion of the Eben and Madatsch glaciers is visible, but from a small house some three hundred feet above, a magnificent view of them is obtained. We climbed to this spot, "Dreisprachenspitze," where three languages (Italian, German and Romanish) meet and clash together.

The scenery from this point is inconceivably grand, and for a time made us forget the road. Before us lay Austria: the entire range of the Ortler-Spitz rising majestically from the depths of a deep ravine forms a fitting portal to beautiful Tirol. Behind us the Engadine, a mirage of towering peaks, range after range, far away into the distance; and between these two enchanting lands lay Italy still slumbering in the warm sunshine.

Looking once more at the road we saw that it was covered with little dark specks: through our glasses they resolved themselves into coaches and carriages crawling upwards like black spiders. We sat upon the rocks and watched them. It was two

BENEATH, OUT OF THE STILL WATERS, RISES THE EXQUISITE LITTLE ISLAND
SAN GIULIO LAGO D'ORTA

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hours before the foremost speck reached the summit.

The little plateau soon presented a scene of busy life: every form of Alpine coach collected, some from Italy, some from Austria. Two-horsed landaus with luggage boxes behind appeared to be the favourite, while here and there heavy five-horsed coaches and diligences rested after their weary climb. The luggage boxes on the backs of the carriages are selected by hotel porters as advertising placards and become a moving picture gallery, covered as they soon are by brightly-coloured labels. At one place at which we stayed, Dennis discovered an enterprising *concierge* sticking a brightly painted label on to Mercédès' bonnet. It stuck like seccotine and remained there for several days, till finally it succumbed under a vigorous attack of the hose.

To return to the summit. Tourists, with their inseparable Baedekers, flocked from one vantage point to another, admiring the view, marvelling at the road and generally enjoying themselves. Many had arrived on foot: stout ladies, clad in the heaviest of tweeds, came toiling up the pass, gasping 'neath a scorching sun; equally stout men, clad in equally stout tweeds and mopping their foreheads, followed their better-halves; sad-faced men, looking neither to right nor left, plodded steadily up the steep path as though it were a treadmill, each with his or her knapsack strapped to the back, a Baedeker in pocket and an Alpine stock in hand. Little wonder that every one retired to rest imme-

diately after dinner when on a walking tour through the Alps.

The great mass of the glaciers passed within a few feet of the hotel, and at night made its close proximity felt. The sunrise next morning was particularly fine; we stayed on the summit till afternoon, and then commenced the descent.

For the first half-mile or so, that is, until we became accustomed to the hairpin turns, it was rather a thrilling experience. Of the forty or fifty corners, during the descent, I do not think more than eight were large enough to allow of turning without manœuvring backwards and forwards. There was but one method of rounding the turns. As we neared the corner where the road appeared to end, I released the clutch (we were running against the compression) and slid down on the brakes: screwing the front wheels to their greatest lock, the car headed straight for the edge of the road. I stopped her within a few inches of the precipice. (From our seats we looked down a sheer drop of 2000 feet.) Out leapt Dennis and placed a block of wood under one of the back wheels. Gently I released the brakes till I felt Mercédès was resting against the scotch. Slipping in the reverse I nodded to Dennis, who grasped the spokes and helped me swing round the front wheels. Opening the throttle I let in the clutch, and Mercédès glided backwards till she almost touched the rock of the opposite bank; we were now facing the descending road, Dennis picked up the wooden scotch and scrambled to his seat, and we crawled down to the

THE MOUNTAINS CLOSE IN AND ENCIRCLE THE LAKE
LAGO DE COMO

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next turn where we went through a similar performance.

Everything, of course, depended on the brakes and side-chains, but I felt confident in Mercédès, whose only fault lay in her long wheelbase. Yet there was always the chance of something failing, that thousand to one chance we are risking every day of our lives, in which case our motoring tour would abruptly end, and we should be hurled into another world with startling suddenness.

A story long since forgotten, told me by some kind friend, recurred to my mind with persistent force: and though I had laughed at the time it was related I never realised the pith of it till now. I felt I must repeat it to Ken, and yielded to the temptation. Perhaps you have heard it. A gentleman, nationality not stated, had hired a car and was being driven over a pass similar to the one we were descending; first astonished and then frightened at the awful corners of the breakneck descent, he stammered to his chauffeur: "I say Léon, what'll happen—and—eh—and where shall we go if the brakes fail?" Léon, a true son of France, ignored the first question, helplessly shrugged his shoulders and replied: "Oh, Mon Dieu, Monsieur, that depends upon our past lives." The gentleman, so the story says, was somewhat thoughtful during the remainder of the descent. It was an exceedingly cheerful tale and one well calculated to smite the hearer with a desire to walk, but nothing so dreadful happened and we continued to descend *en auto.*

On looking down, we saw, on a turn immedi-

ately beneath us, a heavy four-horsed diligence, Keeping on the precipice side of the road, we met and passed it, wondering as we did so how the ten people it contained could sit at ease upon their seats, while behind, upon an iron grid, were strapped five heavy steamer trunks, a load in themselves. Presently we began to lose the first feelings of nervousness, and felt we could raise our eyes from the road without the imminent risk of being instantly dashed into fragments. As we neared the centre of the "tight rope," as Sheila styled the road, we commenced to gaze about us at the wondrous scene. The road cut in the face of a mica-slate mountain, divided two sloping precipices. A thousand feet above stood the hotel we had quitted, silhouetted against a blue expanse, a thousand feet below splashed the stream in its rocky bed and between it and us zigzagged the road, looking like a piece of white cotton thrown carelessly upon a dark cushion. High above our heads the great mountains appeared puny in comparison with the enormous range of snowy peaks above them, from which gleaming fields of ice streamed down, overhanging the valley as though meditating the destruction of the pine forest far beneath, the summit of the massive Ortler dominating all. Shelley summed up the exquisite scene when he wrote:

> "Still, snowy, and serene—
> Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
> Pile round it, ice and rock; broad vales between
> Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
> Blue as the overhanging heaven . . ."

THE ROAD CLIMBS TORTUOUSLY OUT OF THE RAVINE
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The magic of the scene entered into us, the beauties of the snow and ice contrasted with the inky darkness of the pines beneath, the wonders of the road, and the brilliancy of the air all combined to lay us under a spell of enchantment.

> "Time, space and distance ceased to be
> And every step was fresh infinity."

CHAPTER VI

BEAUTIFUL TIROL

THERE never was a jollier or livelier little place than that tiny hotel at Franzenshöhe; every coach and diligence had perforce to halt before its doors and be examined by the one official comprising the *douane*, a host in himself. The musical tinkle of the cow-bells showed that we had descended at least far enough to reach vegetation, though still high above the nearest fir. As the whole of the road to the summit is visible from Franzenshöhe, we could watch the stream of conveyances climbing and descending the long series of knots. Close by a glacier, broken into a thousand crevices, poured over the mountain side like a gigantic wave sparkling in the sunshine with all the radiance of a cascade of gems.

Amidst these scenes never a moment was dull or wasted. Some days we would make excursions over the glaciers or wander upon the mountain sides, though more often it seemed all sufficient to sit lazily at the sheltered door and watch the busy life of the diligences, while drinking in the exquisite

THIS WAS THE SUMMIT OF THE STELVIO, 9200 FEET ABOVE THE SEA

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beauty of the snows and letting their glory sink into our souls.

If it had not been for Mercédès I think we should have wished to stay for ever; but the longing for the car comes with irresistible force—the wish to explore new lands and enjoy fresh sights, to encounter the joys and dangers of the road, to feel the cool breezes blowing against the face, to rush down from the glaciers into the valley and climb swiftly back to the snow—"anything, anywhere," upon the car, is the cry of the motor-germ. With the cheerful official at the busy little *douane* I had to deposit 1800 krs. (about £78) in gold, and wondered as I did so if I was fated ever to see it again. On a previous visit to Austria they had not returned to me the deposit on leaving the country, for the simple reason that they did not possess sufficient, and rather more than a month elapsed before I finally received it—in Paris. Amongst the gold I now tendered were several Russian pieces and also a few double-louis, which were politely, but firmly, refused, so particular are the authorities when receiving a deposit, and so different when asked to refund the same: then one must be sincerely grateful to receive it or its equivalent in any shape or form.

With many expressions of regret we at last tore ourselves away and resumed the descent, travelling backwards and forwards down the rocky slope, Franzenshöhe receding far above our heads and around, springing up like magic, a straggling detachment of stumpy pines, the solitary sentinels of the great army of firs beneath. Soon after entering into the

shadow of the firs we came upon a marble tablet at one side of the road. So beautiful is the scene that one would never connect this spot with the dark deed that the tablet commemorates, for here, amidst nature's most glorious monuments, took place a tragedy. Over the grassy edge was hurled Madeleine de Tourville, an English lady, far out into the depths below, by her false husband, on July 16, 1876.

Some distance further down the descent the road reaches the "Wiese Knott," a wooden hut, built beside a marble obelisk raised to the memory of Josef Pichler, who, in 1804, was the first human being to stand upon the summit of the Ortler. From this spot the view is truly magnificent. Three great glaciers, springing from a single source, are separated one from the other by "immense masses of rock, in themselves mountains"; to the left the Ortler rises out of a bed of crystal; amidst the pines, lost to sight, stands the chapel of the "Three Holy Springs," and out of the depths of the valley, at our feet, comes the incessant roar of a dozen rushing torrents. Trafoi, down to which the road winds, lies far beneath the glaciers up to which it gazes. We stayed here for a few days. Very different was the hotel from the one we had quitted, and the calls of civilisation galled us strangely after the free life we had been leading in that sweet little house so close to the silent snows.

As we were still 5000 feet above the sea level, another long descent awaited us. Plunging into a deep and narrow valley, the road is carried from a

THE SCENERY FROM THIS POINT IS INCONCEIVABLY GRAND

THE STELVIO SUMMIT

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world of ice into a land "flowing with milk and honey." The valley leading into Tirol is very beautiful; quaint wooden huts with overhanging roofs are perched in the most inaccessible places, some high up as it were in the sky, others hanging balanced upon a rock beside rushing torrents, and one wonders how their owners can regain their homes when they have once descended into the valley; here and there a crucifix is erected as an emblem of their simple faith.

Soon after passing through Gamagoi the gorge-like valley widens; the last view of the Ortler-Spitz is shut off from view, and joins at Neu-Spondinig the main road from Landeck to Meran.

What a difference is effected in a few hours, when a frontier is crossed; it is not only that the landscape bears a different name, the great change lies in the people themselves, their customs, manners, dress and speech. Those of Tirol have held aloof from the quick march of civilisation and are thus untouched by its darker stains. Proud of their ancestors, who won for them their freedom, of the names of those whose deeds are written in golden letters, they still believe in their faith and in their fatherland. Each man is still a born marksman and it would go hard with any army that should try to force a passage into their land, as their forefathers proved to the conqueror of Europe himself. Even the Austrian Government are only their nominal lords, and leave this little untamed Republic to send its own army to swell their legions. They are still a deeply religious people and throughout their land

crucifixes and statues of the Virgin are many, some by the road side, others upon the hills and not a few perched upon the edge or summit of some almost inaccessible peak: not for show are they placed here but often to mark the spot where a Tirolean perished, overtaken by storms or swept over precipices, and the cross placed there in loving memory by his kinsfolk. Only a short glance into their history is sufficient to show the self-sacrificing and brave spirit which inspires them: and the traveller must leave the towns and pass through the country to fully appreciate their worth.

The road to Meran lies in a fertile valley and runs through vineyards and orchards, olive groves and sweet pasture-lands relieved now and then by the ruins of many a feudal castle, whose old-world masters were wardens of the gate of Austria. Meran, the ancient capital of Tirol, lies in a basin whose sides are formed of beautifully wooded hills, and is magnificently sheltered. A popular resort during winter, it was now, to us at least, absolutely impossible, the heat as unbearable as on the flat plains of Lombardi, especially felt after our 8000 ft. drop. Therefore we did not halt, but crossing the Passer before it meets and mingles with the Adige, hurried over the twenty miles to Bozen.

Where the valley meets the Brenner, that great highway connecting the North and South, rise the mountains of Mendel and Penegal, over which a road has been built. At their foot Bozen lies, surrounded by acres of vines, growing to profusion in the rays of a sun that makes the town uninhabit-

THE GREAT MASS OF THE GLACIER PASSED WITHIN A FEW FEET OF THE HOTEL
THE STELVIO SUMMIT

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able in summer. We stayed in Bozen only long enough for a cup of tea and, thus refreshed after the dusty valley, left for a climb to the summit of the Mendel Pass, 4500 ft. The road, leaving the hot valley, winds its way up the mountain through beautiful woods, till, coming to a place where the rocks rise perpendicular into the sky, it is cut in the precipice side, twisting this way and that as it follows the irregularities of the rock though never losing sight of the valley. Mercédès greedily devoured the gradient, the road literally flew beneath her as she carried us swiftly up the mountain face. From our seats we watched the valley sink like a stone beneath us, and at times we seemed to hang over space. A train crawling along appeared no larger than a black caterpillar, the lakes looked like drops of water and the woods like patches of ink; on the further side of the valley, above two mountain ranges, towered the whole rugged mass of the "Rosengarten" and illuminated by a dying sun, was seen to great advantage, one living mass of flame, a thousand tongues of fire raised into a glowing sky. Near the end of the climb the road mounts in a series of easy zigzags terminating on the summit, which we reached just under the hour from Bozen after a most enjoyable run. Instead of the quiet out-of-the-world spot one would expect, civilisation has transformed the summit into a busy little town. Formerly inaccessible, save by carriage, a wire railway has been constructed, which in a short time carries the tourist from the heat of the valley to the cool breezes of

the summit. Two large hotels stand looking towards the Ortler range and out of sight of the glowing Dolomites.

We spent only two days on the Mendel, the descent on the other side of the Pass is extremely easy, the road winding down a grassy slope into a fertile valley. Villages, Italian in their narrow streets and general air of decay, were numerous, and their people, speaking that language, were dark-haired and swarthy-faced, totally unlike their brothers of the North; soon the road became a series of ascents and descents, traversing rich country.

I had at first planned to travel over the Tonale Pass into Italy, then along the rocky little Lago d'Iseo and through Brescia to Riva, but I was told that at Dimaro a road branched into the hills, passing over the Campiglio Pass, a road not marked on our maps, but, so we were assured, traversed by many carriages. We determined to change our route and on reaching Dimaro left the main valley and passed through the town, a muddle of narrow streets, where the noise of the car brought many children to hamper our way, and their elders to the windows and doorways to watch us pass. Leaving the village which we had disturbed, like an angry hornet's nest, we began to ascend, through firs, the Val Meledrio; the road is rather narrow and paltry in comparison with other passes, continuing so all the way to the summit where it passes in full view of the Brenta Dolomites and attains a height of about 5600 feet. The summit is somewhat bare

DOWN ONE SIDE THE ROAD IS CUT IN A SERIES OF BEWILDERING ZIGZAGS
THE AUSTRIAN SIDE OF THE STELVIO PASS

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and we lost no time in plunging down the opposite side.

Madonna di Campiglio lies buried in the pines and destitute of view; save for the freshness in the air one might as well be in the valley. The Hôtel des Alpes, formerly an old monastery, still retains many of its ancient associations, and here we stayed.

Every one, from the boots to the head *concierge*, was loud in his warnings not to proceed further down the descent and counselled us earnestly to return the way we had come. "Carriages go, certainly," they admitted, "but for an automobile——" "Where a carriage can go Mercédès will follow," was still our answer, and despite their protests we left next morning. For once they had told the truth: the road from Madonna di Campiglio to Pinzolo was indeed bad, especially for a large and heavy car. It is often too narrow to allow of two vehicles passing, save where it has been specially widened to do so; the trees on either side of the road almost touched the car and prevented one seeing the approach of another conveyance. Consequently when we did meet a carriage toiling up the hill it was always at awkward and unexpected places. We had not proceeded far after leaving the hotel before we came, without warning, upon a two-horsed landau. In a moment the four occupants, including the driver, had leapt madly out and sought shelter in the hedge and the ditch, leaving the two horses and ourselves in sole possession of the road. Presently the head of the driver peeped through the

hedge followed reluctantly by the rest of him; having completely emerged he sidled to his horses' bridles, still keeping a wary eye on us and ready at a moment's notice to return to his sylvan retreat. As the road would not permit of passing I backed Mercédès up the steep descent till we found a wider part, and the horses were led unresisting past.

Twice more we met carriages and twice more did their occupants behave in the same extraordinary manner. Each time we stopped Mercédès and Dennis descended to help the driver; and once Ken and I had to lend a hand with a horse fresher than the rest. Each time the occupants, recovered from their alarm, scowled at us as they climbed to their seats, but seeing how we behaved, their frowns changed to smiles and thanks, and we parted the best of friends. What had terrified them about our particularly peaceful appearance we could not guess, and continued to speculate without hitting upon a satisfactory explanation.

At one place the road descends in a series of very sharp zigzags, and here it is steeper and narrower than at any other part. I think I mentioned before, that Mercédès had an exceptionally long wheel-base, the turns were so sharp and small that we had some difficulty in screwing her round. Unlike the Stelvio, we had practically no room for manœuvring, only a few inches at either end of the car. Dennis and his useful block of wood were requisitioned. Backwards and forwards we moved upon a break-neck gradient, at one moment threatening to

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS IT TWISTS
THE STELVIO PASS

plunge over the road-edge, the next to ram the rocky bank; by dint of tedious and somewhat anxious work I at last got Mercédès round and we slid down to the next turn, equally bad. Had we met a carriage here, it would have been very awkward, being practically impossible to back up the hill, round those wretched elbows. The thick firs hid from view the road we approached and we were quite glad to reach the bottom.

To be on a mountain road, no matter how steep, narrow and intersected with hairpin turns, is not the least dangerous if you have it completely to yourself (providing you keep your head, and the car holds good, *bien entendu*): the chief danger lies in the passing or meeting of horse-drawn vehicles. When one approaches and the horses look askance at the car you instinctively ask yourself, Is the driver man enough to control his animals? if so, well and good: if not and the horses get out of hand, you were safer on a moving avalanche. Unfortunately, many of the drivers do not know how to manage their animals, or are thoroughly frightened of them, and promptly lose their heads on meeting an automobile: a truth not innocent of many of the sad accidents for which the press loves to blame the unfortunate automobilist.

Pinzolo, the village at the foot of the Pass, lies at the entrance of the Val di Genove, and we halted here to obtain some of the luscious fruit so temptingly displayed upon the barrows in the cobbled street, and while buying, learnt why the people in the carriages we had met, should be so suddenly

desirous of walking. It appeared that a car was descending the Pass a week before, when in some way or other the driver lost control (brake failure, or nerve failure, probably). A carriage laden with people ascending from Pinzolo had reached the last of the turns: into it the car dashed, carrying it with every soul aboard over the edge of the road, crashing into the ravine 500 feet below. "That is why," said the old peasant, naïvely, who was relating the story, "those in carriages alight on seeing an automobile approach." The Campiglio Pass is beautiful, undoubtedly, but its beauties cannot be compared to those of its many rivals, whilst the road is not suitable for any long-wheel based car.

After Pinzolo the road traverses an uninteresting valley, through Tione, where the Arno and the Sarca join and wind their way into southern Giudicaria. Near an old bridge, crossing the tranquil river, we branched into the hills upon one side of the stream. A number of peasants were busy drying long yellow grass in the sun, ready to be made into brooms, whilst others were collecting the dried grass, and binding it to poles ready for the market. In a few bold turns the road winds up the mountain side, and enters an exquisite little valley, totally different from the wild rocks and gorges, the snow and ice, or the dusty road we had left.

"The torrents from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mix'd in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow."

WE SAW, ON A TURN IMMEDIATELY BENEATH US, A HEAVY, FOUR-HORSED DILIGENCE
THE STELVIO PASS

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The miniature valley ended in a vine-bordered basin containing the green waters of Lago di Ledro, 2000 feet above her larger sister Garda. A little hotel on its banks so charmed Sheila and Dorothy that they insisted on stopping there for tea : alas, tea was unknown to the bright-faced boyish waiter who hurried forward to help us dismount. We always carry a good supply, however, and on telling him so he promised to do his best. As there was only an old lady besides himself in the house, Sheila and Dorothy carried the sunshine into their kitchen and initiated them into the mysteries of brewing tea. The dear old lady was delighted beyond belief at the result and overwhelmed with joy when they presented her with a half-pound packet for her very own.

Under the cool shade of a vine-covered arbour, beside which splashed a stream clear as crystal, we enjoyed a glorious tea. Honey, cream, milk, jams, home-baked bread and scones, peaches, plums, apricots, pomegranates, oranges, black and white grapes, fresh plucked and in abundance. The young waiter beamed upon us ; the old lady, being prevailed upon, joined the festive board and chatted merrily in her smooth, sweet Italian.

An hour slipped by before we began to realise that dusk was falling, and we reluctantly prepared to depart. I called for the bill and could hardly keep a solemn face as I read its many items. With exactness, worthy of a better object, each detail down to the hot water for the tea was carefully recorded. Totalled, it reached the remarkable sum

of 75 heller (about 7½*d.*), and the waiter's astonishment, when I refused change for a two-kronen piece, was only equalled by his joy when he realised that I was not joking. Both he and the old lady stood in the middle of the road waving their hands till the dust-cloud hid them from view.

Dropping rapidly, the road continues through a land of vines and olive-groves, and passing high above a waterfall, we saw, 800 feet directly beneath us, the broad expanse of Garda, that bluest of all the lakes. The journey to the water's edge is full of novelty, first by zigzags, and then as the road reaches a place where the mountain towers some 700 feet sheer out of the lake, it is cut, in one long sloping line, deep out of the solid rock: frequently jutting far out over the water till a stone rolled over its edge will, after a few moments, drop with a splash into the lake. Sweeping round sharp corners of rock, passing through several tunnels now and then, as it were, hanging between heaven and earth, we came in sight of Riva, dozing in the rosy sunset beneath the ruins of the castle of the Scaligers upon the side of the precipitous Rocchetta.

Continuing the descent, the road ever cut in the rocks, we reached the water's edge and passed through the old town with its quaint harbour and busy square.

That end of Garda which lies within the borders of Austria is undoubtedly the cream of the whole lake. There the grandeur of the Alps is brought to mingle dreamily with the softer beauties of Italy.

THE ROAD IS CUT IN THE PRECIPICE SIDE

THE MENDEL PASS

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At this end of the lake fair Riva enjoys a favoured existence. Gazing over the still waters towards the south, olive yet clings to the north. In her busy market you can buy fruit, almost tropical in the state of perfection to which it has grown: each morning the sun shines down upon the town; at mid-day, when its heat threatens to become unbearable, there springs up a cool fresh breeze, blowing from off the blue expanse, and lasting till the Rocchetta throws its deep shadow over the town. The hotel, standing in its palm-studded grounds, juts far out into the lake and is an ideal spot in which to rest; bathing in the morning, when the lake lies like a mirror, and in the afternoon skimming over its ruffled surface in a lug-sailed boat admirably suited to the strong, refreshing breeze, faithful as the sun himself. In the silvery moonlight, when the lake again lay calm, we would row out upon its still surface, while from shore would come, floating upon the night air, the voices of those who sing the same familiar songs so dear to Italy. Every few minutes would we be illuminated by the strong rays of a searchlight, from out of the blackness, which, leaving us, would follow the dark shores, searching for smugglers who might try to slip into Italy.

The next mountain pass we intended to climb was "The Rolle," one of those great highways between Austria and Italy; a climb leading into the midst of the Dolomites: no longer were we to be compelled to gaze at them from a distance, but as we had been carried by the Stelvio to the Glaciers, so would we

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be brought close to their bare and rugged peaks. Arco lies some few miles from Riva and upon a great rock in the centre of the town stands its castle, destroyed by the French during the bitter war of the Spanish succession. From Arco the road passes through a valley strewn with the *débris* of many landscapes and ancient avalanches. Near Trento it joins the Brenner, which here is broad and flat. On the hillsides, amid the vines, are the ruins of many a forgotten castle and old-time keep: high upon rocks they stand, their warriors at peace, their crumbling walls a home for night birds, a prey to every growing creeper that can find space upon them.

At the little *pavé* village of Neumarkt we left the Brenner valley and commenced our 6300 feet climb. It was a road to delight the heart of Mercédès, a heavy gradient, wide turns, and kept in a state of perfection; as on the wings of the wind we were carried up the hill, the road rising steeply in front and receding like a stone in our rear. Across the Brenner valley we could see a white line cut in the face of the rock rising from the Kalterer Sea to the summit 5000 feet above: it was the Mendel Pass road up which we had sped after leaving Bozen.

Rounding turn after turn as the road ascended the hill side in easy curves we continued to rise till, about 3000 feet above the Brenner, the road passes through a cleft in the mountains, enters the Val Fiemme, and follows high upon one side of the valley; below streamed the Avisio, glistening amidst scattered villages. It was late in the afternoon

THE ROAD IS CUT DEEP OUT OF THE SOLID ROCK
ROAD TO RIVA

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when we reached the Nave d'Oro, the old inn at Predazzo, that has sheltered many famous men of science on their mineralogical researches. With a quick turn to the right we followed the Travignólo, a stream pouring out of a narrow valley. Again the road commenced to climb, winding backwards and forwards through steep green pastures and into the resinous pines. At Paneveggio, a hotel lost amidst the thick fir woods, we stopped for tea; the sun was threatening to disappear behind the hills as we resumed the climb. Another thousand feet and the road left the zone trees entering a region of moss-clad rocks and wild, coarse grass, climbing till it reached the little wooden hut upon the summit, from which "the view" burst upon us.

And what a view! How I wish I had the power to adequately describe its wonders. The road ran close to the base of a rugged range of mountains: high above the road the pinnacle-like summit of the Cimone della Pala, "The Matterhorn of the Dolomites," rose sheer into the heavens. As far as the eye could reach extended an unending line of bare and barren peaks: we had reached the summit exactly at the moment when the sun cast its dying light upon the scene, colouring the whole range with the deepest shade of red, a shade which makes the rocks stand out as though heated by an unseen furnace. I think it was the most beautiful sight any one of us had ever seen, the brilliant-coloured Dolomites rising out of inky pines, the cloudless sky and the glorious sunset. I only know that we remained immovable, staring at the

exquisite picture; even the throbbing heart of Mercédès was stilled and a silence deep and profound reigned over the whole scene, broken only by the sweet-toned bells of a scattered herd of cattle, invisible in the dusk of the valley, returning to their homes.

> "A murmur of Eternity and Immensity of life and death
> stole through the soul,"

as with Carlyle's wanderer at eventide. Slowly we watched the grey shadows creep up the face of the rocks driving the rosy glow before it. Not till the whole range had turned to steel did we stir, and then, without a word to one another, we commenced to descend the road swallowed up in the dark firs.

Like Madonna di Campiglio, San Martino di Castrozza was once an old monastery; also it lies some distance beneath the summit, but unlike Madonna di Campiglio it commands a glorious view, quite as grand as that from the summit. Our rooms were good, and from the balcony before their windows we could enjoy an uninterrupted view of the towering rocks, too steep and barren to hold snow, yet high above the line of perpetual ice. Our stay here is amongst our most pleasant recollections, and we were never tired of sitting on the fir-strewn ground amidst the alpine flowers and gazing up at the jagged heights.

In the Alps one seldom feels lonely. Each peak, its name once learnt, becomes an old and valued friend, and one unconsciously speaks of it as though the

THE MATTERHORN OF THE DOLOMITES ROSE SHEER INTO THE HEAVENS

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acquaintance dated back to pre-historic ages. That is one of the secrets of the companionship of the mountains: the reason why people come year after year to wander through the hills and renew their friendship with those silent comrades.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE HEART OF THE DOLOMITES

WE had no wish to descend into Italy, and therefore were compelled to return the way we had come as far as Predazzo. As we were mounting the car under the critical eyes of a miscellaneous collection of visitors, the waiter who had attended to us during our visit was making himself busy helping to arrange our rugs. "You look comfortable," he remarked as he scrutinised us, ready to start: then leaning across the umbrella basket, he added, "I must leave here to-morrow for Padua, and if you 'ad bin going to Italy instead of Austria I would 'ave com' with you, for sure." "Oh would you," replied Ken suavely; "very good of you indeed; you might have had the chauffeur's seat, who would doubtless have been proud to walk, or have sat with the ladies in the tonneau—so sorry."

"I too am sorry," responded the waiter, on whom the sarcasm was lost, "for without doubt I would 'ave com' with you," he added regretfully as we left the door.

"Yes, sir," said Dennis in reply to Ken; "he told me he'd got a job somewhere in Italy, and had we

A RUGGED RANGE OF MOUNTAINS
THE ROLLE PASS

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been going there he would have come with us. I told him we'd have been delighted if he'd brought a few friends with him: and I'm blest if he didn't swallow it for gospel and shake hands with me."

The 2000 feet climb to the summit is very beautiful in daytime; the Dolomites are seen every now and then between the firs, the sunlight streaming through the heavy foliage. At Predazzo we continued along the valley we had left and followed up the refreshing waters of the Avisio. Our intention was to ascend the Karer Pass, the centre of the Rosengarten, the road branching into the mountains somewhere upon the left. Warned by our map that we must pass through the hamlet of Vigo, about a mile from the main road, we were on the *qui vive* for all branch roads leading to the left. Only one did we see, but as it looked more like a cart-track than a road we took no notice and continued our way up the valley. Puzzled by the delay the road took in putting in an appearance, we stopped at a village to inquire the way and were informed that we had passed the road. This was hardly promising and we retraced our tyre marks in wonder, for save the cart-track, we were sure we had seen no road. No road did we see and in due course reached the cart-track. Sheila espied a bashful signboard peeping through the hedge; on this was painted "Vigo" and a dilapidated hand pointed up the track. To make assurance doubly sure, we asked a bright-faced boy driving a lumbering bullock-waggon that came clattering noisily down the path completely filling its narrow passage. "Yes, it

was the road," he said cheerfully. "A bad road certainly, but not for long." Nothing venture, nothing have, and setting Mercédès at the track we left the hard road. Two deep and sudden gutters welcomed us, by giving a sample of what was to follow, causing us to reduce our pace to a pathetic crawl. Sandy and rutty was the path, steep in places and very narrow. About a mile after leaving the valley we reached Vigo and crawled through its narrow street, crossed again and again by dry stony gutters. Almost at the last house the whole aspect of the road changed, and as far as could be seen blossomed into a finely-made mountain road: for some inexplicable reason the good road had been constructed only as far as Vigo, another mile and it would have reached the valley. At the spot where the good road entered Vigo, we found the way barred by a block of wood stretched from house to house. An old bent woman, dressed in black, hobbled from a doorway and beckoned us to approach, demanding 3 krs. as toll. Receiving the money she at once hobbled back into the house, and through an open window we saw her turning a handle and one end of the wooden bar rose into the air. With a spurt we reached the new road, and as the hill was steep, commenced to make up for lost time. The road, though a trifle narrow, was excellent, climbing swiftly and crossing several wooden bridges which carrry it over the stony bed of dried-up torrents. On this side of the Pass the wonderful effects of the Dolomites are hid by heavy pine forests;

THE DOLOMITES ARE SEEN EVERY NOW AND THEN BETWEEN THE FIRS

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though the views of the valley are sometimes beautiful. To see the Karer Pass to advantage, one must ascend from the opposite side, *i.e.*, from Bozen, when one is always facing and nearing the Rosengarten; unfortunately that road is forbidden to automobiles.

The summit, 5700 feet, lies between two ranges of Dolomites and though undoubtedly grand, we were sorry we had not visited the Karer before the unsurpassed Rolle. However, the Pass has a beauty of its own and we were glad to have seen it.

Next morning, to the loud barking of the magnificent St. Bernard belonging to the hotel, we departed, returning the way we had come the evening before. At Vigo we were welcomed by the old dame in black, who smiled at us over the log of wood in a way to freeze the water in the radiator. Another 3 krs. and we were crawling down the wretched sandy lane. Yet another climb was before us, "The Pordoi." Till recently there had been only a mule-track over the pass, and on all our maps it was shown as such. But the proprietor of the Nave d'Oro, where we had halted to obtain petrol, informed us that a new road was in course of construction, which would put Cortina di Ampezzo in direct communication with the south end of the Brenner. The road had been finished over the summit of the pass, though not yet officially opened to traffic. Upon this, we determined to sample the pass, which we knew for a fact to be very fine. "For," I argued, "we can only be stopped by the road itself or by the police." At Campitello, a

village nestling snugly in the warm pines, the new road commences. Never were we so agreeably surprised, for the road over the Pordoi excelled by far any other we had traversed. Broader than the Stelvio, with a surface as smooth as glass, it ascended from the valley in zigzags, yet so magnificently engineered that although the returning road lay parallel with the one below it, the corners were constructed in such a fashion that one could sweep round them with undiminished speed. Through the firs we could see the valley sinking beneath us:

> "With towns and hamlets studded,
> And with streams and vapours grey."

The square-shaped Stella group of Dolomites grew closer as the pines thinned. One or two carriages we met caused some delay, their horses, mostly young ones, resolutely refusing to pass. Drawing Mercédès on to the precipice side of the road, I stopped her engine, and Ken, Dennis and I descended to help. After some coaxing, the restive animals were led past, and it was not until the carriage disappeared far beneath us, that I restarted the engine. Dennis, as I mentioned before, had once been a coachman, and he patted and talked to the horses in a way that visibly astonished and charmed their drivers, whose black looks quickly melted into smiles and thanks.

"I do like the way you always stop when we meet a horse that looks restive," said Sheila, who sat in front with me. "I love animals, horses and dogs most."

THE SQUARE-SHAPED STELLA GROUP GREW CLOSER AS THE PINES THINNED
THE PORDOI PASS

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"I think we all love them," I answered, "and any one who doesn't will never make a motorist. It's the cad who goes barging recklessly along the roads that gives motorists a bad name. Those drivers we have just passed will be generous toward future automobilists, till some day they meet that fiend flying along, careless of what damage he does, who, never wanting to traverse the same road twice, reckons he can escape the consequences, forgetting that he leaves behind him an inheritance of ill-will and discontent, which will be vented upon the considerate motorist who follows. Thank Heaven, that class of men is rare and will soon become a thing of the past."

"It is a shame," agreed Ken. "If those drivers who began by scowling and ended by raising their hats, meet the motor fiend, all our work will be undone in an instant and they'll once more be motor haters. I've met him, in my own country too, and know what it is to be left to quiet a needlessly terrified horse."

Meanwhile, we had been rising rapidly through a region of firs, and soon passed the last little pine, bravely struggling to live beyond its appointed sphere of life, and, like many a human example, suffering in consequence. As the road winds its way through scattered rocks and Alpine flora it enters a world of Dolomites, mighty giants of rock springing up as though by magic from the road's edge, and enclosing us with a stupendous wall of spires and pinnacles. If the road was the finest in the Alps from a speed point of view, ten times finer

was the scenery, as far as Dolomites were concerned —scenery once seen never to be forgotten. Nearing the end of the climb, the road passes before a small hotel some 400 feet beneath the summit, and looking but a white speck amidst its magnificent surroundings. Flying up the deserted road we gained the wooden shelter hut upon the summit, standing 7350 feet above sea level.

We had thought "the Rolle" unsurpassable for Dolomites, yet even its grandeur was more than equalled by the Pordoi. To the left towered the Boé-Spitz, to the right the white snowfields of the Marmolada, while before us rose up innumerable ranges of barren peaks as far as the eye could see, wave after wave of mountains. Behind us, to the right, stood the naked Stella and Langkofel groups, and behind them the whole massive back of the Rosengarten.

We stayed at the little hotel below the summit. Never during the tour had we been so completely isolated from civilisation; the telegraph was unknown—only a post-waggon every third day; no hurrying throng of tourists to disturb the silence. Upon the slopes of the surrounding hills, amidst a profusion of wild and beautiful Alpine flowers, grew edelweiss in perfect freedom, grew and withered there, living its life in the pure air, unplucked and undisturbed by human hands. On every other pass there had always been a crowd of people arriving or departing, the telegraph and post were in daily use, and although one rested under the shadow of the glaciers, yet one was always reminded of the out-

side world. Here it was different; not even a tiny village disturbed the silence that hung in the air, a silence that could be felt, and from the windows of the hotel it was possible through the glasses to see the wild chamois springing from crag to crag in joyous freedom.

The proprietor of the hotel advised us to make the ascent of the Boé-Spitz for the sake of the splendid view from its summit. "It is only a summer walk," he had said, "an' so long as you stray not from the path you can kom' to no'arm. I know the mountain well, for I myself am a 'Klimmer.'" He pooh-poohed the idea of taking a guide (I had proposed engaging two), and advised us to start early.

The sun was shining brightly when we left the hotel, soon after seven o'clock one morning, and in good spirits climbed the road to the summit of the pass and commenced the ascent. As we climbed slowly up the winding path amidst the edelweiss, growing as thick as daisies and buttercups, there began to open out before us range after range of pinnacled Dolomites, in their midst the icefields of the Marmolada forming a striking contrast to their brown surroundings. Looking into the valley, upon the opposite side of the Pordoi from that up which we had ascended, nearly the whole of the road is visible, winding in innumerable and easy turns mile after mile from the bare summit into the fertile valley. The morning soon belied its promise of glorious weather, the sun disappearing behind a bank of clouds which had sprung into existence

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from an apparently cloudless sky. Leaving the last struggling blade of grass the path led amongst rough boulders, becoming obliterated, great rocks giving place to lesser ones, till at last we were climbing over an ever-moving mass of small pebbles which gave way beneath our feet. The great wall of perpendicular rock at whose base we were struggling was split in two at one place, leaving a narrow passage through which the stream of loose stones poured. Attached to the left-hand wall was a wire rope some sixty or seventy feet in length, and by its help we pulled and dragged ourselves over the ever-slipping gravel. The sun had now completely disappeared and heavy clouds were hurrying along from the south-west, covering the different summits with thick mists. Reaching the source of the cataract of stones we passed between the two high rocks, and, crossing a large patch of snow, found ourselves in a region of desolation. We were on the precipice edge of a vast amphitheatre of what looked like the crater of an extinct volcano, surrounded by bare unscaleable mountains of rock. At the opposite side of this gulf rose the summit of the Boé; we had reached half-way, and the most difficult half was yet to be climbed. But now all semblance of a path had vanished; our way led amongst uneven rocks, whose crevices were filled with frozen snow and ice. The only guide to mark a path was a dab of red paint every forty or fifty feet, and many times we had to search the rock-strewn ground before we could locate the next patch of colour. As we climbed the ground became more broken and the way more rough; at

many places it was necessary to crawl round the face of enormous boulders, whose smooth sides offered but small protection to which to cling. Luckily, both Sheila and Dorothy possessed good nerves and climbed intrepidly. Altogether, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Meanwhile, the clouds were approaching rapidly, and distant thunder rumbled a warning. We ought to have turned back directly we saw the clouds gathering; I recognised that when it was too late and blamed myself afterwards, as did Ken, for not hearkening to wiser counsel; but, having passed the half-way, we foolishly continued the ascent.

The summit at last, and redoubling our efforts, we reached the cairn of stones even as the first wave of mist blew across the crater, shutting out all the magnificent view we had hoped to obtain. Bitterly we reviled the proprietor, who had persuaded us not to engage a guide, for the path he had so strictly warned us not on any account to stray from, was now completely hidden, the red patches of paint, even a few feet distant, being quite invisible. Having had no idea of the style of climb we had attempted, we had brought no extra coats or wraps, and were instantly soaked to the skin; moreover, it was freezing hard and the cold was intense, so intense that in a few moments it was impossible to hold our alpenstocks in our numbed hands. An Alpine friend of mine used to say that if one were caught on a dangerous peak by the mists "never move an inch, but wait till they have passed." That is good counsel if one has been

warned and has heavy clothes to don, and a good guide, or in other words, when one is perfectly prepared. We had neither, and Sheila and Dorothy, nearly perishing with the cold, stumbled as they walked. Feeling in my pocket for my flask, I found to my dismay that it must have dropped out while I was climbing. It was an unenviable position, on the tiny summit of a Dolomite 11,000 feet above the sea; enshrouded by the mists, wet, tired, and, what was worst of all, almost frozen stiff. The storm, which had been gradually getting nearer, arrived, and commenced to make our already disagreeable position still more disagreeable:

> "From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
> Leaps the live thunder! not from one lone cloud,
> But every mountain now hath found a tongue;"

as Byron very aptly puts it. Unfortunately ours was one of the mountains that had found its tongue, and the "live thunder" was getting unpleasantly close, so close that we prepared to depart with all haste. Next came the question, which way? No path or guiding blood-spot could we distinguish, but trusting to luck, we faced the descent, "the summer walk," I leading with Sheila, while Ken looked after Dorothy. I have only a very hazy recollection of the climb down to the crater; we seemed to be descending into the centre of the earth, to the music of the infernal regions, over a maze of endless rocks, now helping one another, now endeavouring to keep our bodies warm and the blood flowing through our veins. Climbing down one of the

dangerous passages, Sheila slipped and hurt her ankle against a rugged edge of rock. This made matters worse, for it was imperative to keep always on the move. At last we stood upon the edge of the crater: our difficulty now was to follow the red marks round the precipice-edged circle. I knew that if we missed the narrow entrance through which we had ascended, we might go on walking round that circle till we were exhausted or the mists cleared. When we could not distinguish the next red mark, while the others remained together I would cautiously crawl over the boulders in search of it, wandering about till I discovered the welcome mark. Shouting back, I called incessantly till the others came up. Ken and I took it in turns to do this, and once when Ken had disappeared into the mists hunting for it, he cried out that he could not find it anywhere, and that I think was the worst moment of our experience, such a feeling of utter helplessness entered into our hearts as we stood together endeavouring to instil some warmth into our bodies. A great shout, such as only Ken could utter, brought the welcome news that he had found the missing red, and with renewed hope we toiled in the direction of his voice. He had also found the narrow path to the throat of the mountains, and the great patch of snow over which we had crossed.

We were now quite safe and cheerfully commenced to descend by the help of the wire rope. We soon gave this up, for all that was necessary was to stand in the loose stones, balancing with

our alpenstocks and be carried down the steep hill at a good speed, forming the centre of a miniature avalanche. The exercise was violent, and warmed our bodies, setting the blood coursing freely through the veins. The mists and storm were now above us, and although the temperature was low, the air seemed warm after what we had passed through. Sheila's ankle was beginning to swell, and the rough descent caused her a great deal of pain. It was a long walk back to the hotel, and our clothes were still wringing wet as we reached its thrice-welcome doors. The proprietor, we found, was in a state of anxiety at our late arrival, and without a word of explanation, we trooped upstairs. A warm bath and complete change were luxuries indescribable, and restored our good feelings. The storm outside continued with unabated violence, the wind howled and shrieked as though the elements were wrath at our escape from their clutches; the thunder came in deafening claps and the lightning was incessant, revealing the jagged peaks against a greenish light.

There is one thing I ought to mention, that is remotely connected with our adventure. I was in the office of the hotel, telling the proprietor our experiences, and incidentally our private opinion of his advice *re* the guide and "summer walk."

"It iss nothing in goot weather," he answered, "as long ass you keep to the path you will kom' to no 'arm, it iss an easy climb, but you should not haf on no account moved when the clouds descended: it iss a most dangerous thing for to do: When I am

in the mist I always remain where I was, and move not."

"But," I argued, somewhat angrily, "if we had stayed there we should have been frozen to death, as you refrained from warning us to take coats and wraps, and did not even give us an idea of the climb we had undertaken: in fine weather it would be a most enjoyable ascent, taking guides if only to carry our things, but alone and in a storm of thunder, lightning and rain, it is exactly the reverse."

He was silent for a minute, then said: "I will tell to you something that will astonish you. A fortnight ago at this 'otel, there came two young men, great fr'en's, to stop some day. One morning they commenced the ascent of the Boé. On the flat platform round the crater they lost their way although the sun was shining brightly. One of them sat down while his fr'en' went to look for the path. He wandered 'bout till he discovered him, and returned to the place where his fr'en' was left, but no fr'en' wass there, an' thinking he 'ad found the path 'imself, he descended the mountain 'oping to find 'im at the 'otel. But no, he 'ad not arrive.' A search-party set out at once but could not his fr'en' discover till at last they found 'im at the foot of a ravine, close to the place where 'is fr'en' left 'im. He was quite dead, but it was not the fall which kill 'im, for they foun' traces where he try to clim' the overhanging rock and fall back into his prison: also that he 'ad arrange some stones for a pillow and laid 'imself down to die, an' there they foun' 'im. I did not tell you this yesterday, it

might 'af spoil your clim'. Yess, it wass a mos' unfortunate affair—mos' unfortunate."

Unfortunate! I thought it one of the saddest of the many sad tragedies of the Alps. A young man, full of life, setting out with a friend for a pleasant climb, and dying the death of a trapped rat. His agonised attempts to climb the overhanging rocks, his shouts for aid till he could shout no more, and then the knowledge that he must die, and the quiet despair with which he laid down upon the frozen ground in the bitter cold, and tried to sleep, knowing that he was closing his eyes for the last time. What a death, lonely and wretched; it was too awful to think about and though I told Ken, it was only when we were nearing home that I related the sad tale to Sheila and Dorothy.

CHAPTER VIII

WHERE HEROES TROD

To reach Innsbruck we wished to join the Brenner Pass at Franzensfeste instead of returning to Bozen: this would mean crossing the Falzarego Pass to Cortina and thence along the beautiful Pusterthal valley, but Dennis made the alarming discovery that Mercédès' tanks were almost destitute of benzine and oil. We had not been able to obtain any since leaving Predazzo and had since climbed two mountain passes. Therefore it would be tempting fortune to try to reach Cortina, and as we had stretched Providence rather freely lately, he might retaliate in an unpleasant manner if we tried his patience too far. So Bozen it must be, we decided. Except the Stelvio we regretted leaving the Pordoi more than any other pass. The complete isolation from restraint, for we had had the whole summit to ourselves, the absence of tourists, the comfortable little hotel with its incomparable surroundings, combined to rank our stay there amongst the most pleasant experiences of a delightful tour.

There is little to describe of our return to the

Brenner: leaving the hotel one beautiful morning, and entering the pines we passed down the same wonderful road, leaving behind us multitudes of silent bare Dolomites and taking away with us a recollection full of the pleasantest remembrances. As we descended through the firs the far-off valley rose to greet us: the white specks and long white threads becoming pretty little farm-houses and long broad roads, the land losing its appearance of a patched quilt and presenting a scene of fertile cultivation. At Campitello we rejoined the beautiful valley and raced the tumbling waters, splashing amongst the rocks, on their way to Italy. Ever and anon the valley is split on one side or another; above the deep ravine thus formed, rise giant Dolomites, the snow in their crevices glistening like diamonds in the warm sunbeams. At Predazzo, while Mercédès imbibed benzine, we thanked the proprietor of the Nave d'Oro for his information about the Pordoi road and the excellent time we had spent. Refreshed, Mercédès sprang forward along the level Alpine valley and plunged down the long descent into the Brenner, 3000 feet below, reaching the main road at Auer, a little town some few miles off Neumarkt, the village from which we had ascended. Following the vine-clad Brenner we naturally reached Bozen, which, as usual, was quite unbearable beneath its broiling sun.

To Innsbruck, the road crosses over the Brenner Pass, the lowest and most used pass in the great chain of Alps. There are few magnificent views, the road ever lying between the mountains in a

long valley; even the summit, some 4400 feet, is only a village in the same eternal valley. The road winds in no grand tourniquets, but rises continuously beside the railway, as far as the summit, never out of sight of civilisation. The pass is used more as a commercial passage than as a pleasure excursion. Still, it is through the heart of the Austrian Alps, and if the scenery is not particularly majestic, its associations with the terrible struggles of the plucky Tirolese against the pillaging hordes of the French and Bavarians more than compensate for this. Here it was that the heroes, Hofer, Speechbacker, Teimar, Hormayr and their devoted followers contested every inch of ground, dying willingly in the service of Austria, whose Emperor rewarded their devotion and loyalty so basely.

The Brenner is the most direct link between the north and south, and also the lowest and easiest to traverse. Naturally its history dates back to the time when Rome sent out her conquering legions, and the Brenner carried them through the Alps. Since then it has watched the continual passage of warriors through its mountains.

From Bozen the road leads towards the hills and enters a high and rocky gorge, through which the Eisack rushes. Crossing the railway, the road follows the shining rails, and is good; the scenery is beautiful, though not grand. At Brixen the road from the Pusterthal valley joins, and from here to Mittenwald every kilometre is the scene of a battle; every bridge, every rock, every passage has been fiercely defended. The history of that

wonderful little war of 1809, in which the courage and devotion of a handful of peasants were opposed to the unlimited resources of a conqueror who had just subdued Italy and won Austria, is more than remarkable, and no instance is more praiseworthy than the defence of the Eisack pass. The peasants, holding their mountains against overwhelming numbers, were compelled to retreat step by step, many dying rather than give way: retreating from one natural barrier to another, till, in the dreaded Eisacthal, they made a last stand and struck such a blow for freedom that the Duke of Danzig himself was glad to hurry northwards and leave the Tirolean heroes in full possession of their beloved fatherland, for which they had fought, and had held so nobly.

The climb from Bozen is nothing, and we soon approached the summit: the roaring torrent of the Eisack gradually diminished till it was only a gentle stream falling amongst the rocks. Brennerbad, the summit, lies in a viewless valley, the peaceful scene for ever broken by the continuous rumble of the trains. A waterfall pouring down from the hills separates into two streams. One, the Eisack, flowing into the Adige, is carried into the hot Adriatic: the other, forming the Sell, rushes down to Innsbruck and is quickly conveyed by the Inn into the Danube and so into the terror-stricken region of the Black Sea.

The whole beauty of the Brenner lies in the descent to Innsbruck. It is an easy and delightful run, the scenery very beautiful. The road, descending through firs, loses sight of the railway and

passes high along the edge of a deep ravine, descending gently, till, finally, it emerges from the pines, and the beauties of Innsbruck burst into view. Lying upon the green banks of the swift Inn, the capital of Tirol enjoys a lovely situation beneath a range of snow-clad hills, which rise up 7000 feet, dividing Tirol from its ancient enemy, Bavaria, and sheltering Innsbruck from the cold winds of the north. I know the Brenner, having passed over it many times, but the swoop down upon Innsbruck from the summit never loses its attractions. Berg-Isel and Hall lie below us, the scene of the triumph of Tirol and the final recovery of its capital. Beneath the triumphal arch under which the Emperor Francis I. passed a few days before his death, the road enters Innsbruck and brings us to our hotel. The town, apart from its connection with the Tirolean heroes, is full of interest: two statued churches are amongst its many attractions; its garden and streets ever in view of the snow, combine to render it a heaven-sent paradise to the tourist.

Again "en route" our way led us along the right bank of the Inn, beneath the shadow of the hills; to our right branched off the beautiful road winding up to Seefeld and the deep Wallen See, and still further upon the same side joined the road from the easy and well-wooded Fern Pass—two delightful drives. Landeck lies at the junction of three valleys, and is a busy little coaching town upon the borders of the Engadine. Passing through the town, the road enters a narrow gully, winding beneath the Castle

of Landeck, a stately old building standing high above the town, down upon which it gazes with lofty contempt. Following the waters of the Inn, the road a few miles further on crosses the stream, by means of a heavy iron bridge. Upon the other bank, at the roadside, stands a simple monument, a bronze eagle with outstretched wings; beneath it is cut "1703–1809": yet these plain figures tell a fearful tale of slaughter, for this is the "Pontlatzer-Brücke," the spot where the Tirolese "Landsturm" practically annihilated their numerous invaders, the Bavarians, in 1703, and the French in 1809. The road now runs beneath the ruins of Burg Laudeck and along a valley dotted with sharp-pointed steeples and steep-roofed houses. Recrossing the river by a solid stone bridge, we commenced to ascend the Finstermünz Pass; the road, taking a long slant up the side of the valley, is broad, and well made, with a gradient extremely easy. Although the summit is 5000 feet above the sea, the climb is nothing, but the scenery is exceedingly beautiful. Where the valley takes a wide, circular bend, the road naturally follows suit and at this point reaches Hoch Finstermünz, a small cluster of houses 500 feet above the River Inn. Here we elected to stay, for the night was fast closing in. Our rooms faced a valley bordered by great rocky heights, the home of the wild eagle and other feathered lords of the air. Next morning I was awakened by the cracked bell of a midget chapel which stands opposite the hotel, and as the sun was shining brightly, banished all sleep into another world, and dressing quickly,

WE STOPPED MERCÉDÈS AT THE EDGE OF THE GREEN LAKE
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descended for breakfast. I was joined soon after by the rest, who also had risen betimes at the command of the tiny chapel. It was therefore early when we left the hospitable little hotel and continued the easy road. About half a mile further, on a projecting rock, stands a metal figure of a chamois from which a splendid view into the valley is obtained. The road then passes through a tunnel or two and turns to the left, entering a narrow little defile, passing beneath the shadow of a square-shaped fort, which stands upon the banks of a noisy waterfall. Winding higher, the road quits the tiny valley, and after a series of wide turns reaches the summit, a long flat plateau commanding a magnificent view of the snowy Ortler Range, our old friend standing out clear and imposing.

Upon the summit of the pass are three lakes, each of different colour, green, brown and grey. We stopped Mercédès at the edge of the green lake to enjoy the beauties of the scene. In the distance, behind the waters, stretched the silent line of snowy peaks; between them and us on the spur of a small hill stood a little white church with a needle-like spire of gold, and, as though to complete the picture, beside the road a wooden crucifix was erected. We approached the crucifix and gazed at the work there displayed. For it *was* a work, a work that must have taken much time and thought on the part of the peasants who erected it. Beside the dying Christ, hung a collection of wooden models of all the instruments used in the Crucifixion. The swords and arms of the Roman guards, the manacles, the clubs

and staves, the hammer and nails, the pincers, the spear, the ladder, the sponge of vinegar, the dice-box, were among the many things shown. Below, rudely carved in wood, was nailed a faithful picture of the Crucifixion; and, erected above the cross, a slanting shelter to protect it from the weather.

Though the sun was shining brightly, there was a decided coolness in the air, which brought us the first warning that winter was coming, and we must not linger too long upon the high summits, lest we be caught in the snow. As our intention was to return to Switzerland over the Arlberg Pass, we had, perforce, to retrace our path to Landeck: before doing so I proposed that we should descend the Finstermünz upon the south side as far as Neu-Spondinig in the valley to Meran and look once more upon the glorious glaciers of the Stelvio. The descent is tame, the road passing down a grassy bank, though with a good view of the valley. Each quaint little hamlet upon the hillside is proud of the possession of a church of its own. From Neu-Spondinig we looked again at the glaciers guarding the gate through which we had entered Tirol. After lunch we remounted the pass and descended to Landeck. A puncture delayed us, and it was in the dark that we passed beneath the old castle and groped our way to its excellent posting hotel. We were now treated to the only bad weather during the tour, an experience we would have willingly dispensed with. That night it rained, and next day it continued without a break, dark masses of cloud came rolling down the Arlberg and, becoming trapped in the hills round

A WORK THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN MUCH TIME AND THOUGHT

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Landeck, revenged themselves by emptying their contents upon the town. That night and the day following set themselves the by no means easy task of lowering the record rainfall of the previous day, and the following morning tried its best to follow suit. We waited no longer, but donning our heavy furs and pulling up the warm collars, set out to brave the elements. The ground was sodden and slippery with mud and from beneath our wheels a yellow wave flew out on either side. Our only fear was that rain in the valley would mean snow in the mountains, for the weather had changed from summer to icy winter. The summits of the surrounding hills lay under snow, that is, those not enveloped in mists, and the air blew keen and sharp in our faces, making our eyes water till we lowered the glass screen.

The Arlberg Pass, rising 6000 feet, is one of the great highways between two nations. The guide-books say little concerning the road, and are filled chiefly with praise of the railway. True, the railway is a fine piece of engineering skill, but so is the Gotthard, Mont Cenis and Simplon. In the train one might as well pass through any four for all the difference there is; each is a dark unpleasant journey, varied only by the different lengths of time occupied by the passage, and people shut in the carriages can form no idea of the pass beneath which they are borne.

At St. Antin the climb begins and the road rises steeply almost to the summit. As we flew up the steep road the snow line grew nearer and the air

became colder; at last the pines were hung with icicles and snow began to make its appearance on the roadside. Soon the whole ground was white around us, the road alone clear of snow and winding like a black serpent. Climbing higher the road dived into the snow and we came upon the old Hospitz. Half house, half church, its doors open in welcome to any traveller seeking shelter. It was a beautiful sight that old Hospitz, one that will live long in our minds. In summer when the hills are blue and red with Alpine flowers, one does not think of the hospice in the same way. It is only when one comes upon it during the long eight months of winter that one can realise what a benefit it really is, and what unselfish heroes are the monks who live in its storm-bound walls, ready to sacrifice their lives in the saving of strangers. What a haven of rest must the old building seem to the half-frozen wanderer stumbling through the snow, and what feelings of thankfulness must be experienced when he reaches its open doors. All honour, then, to the brave fathers upon the lonely summits.

A little past the hospice lies the summit, deep in snow, merely a narrow ledge, and the watershed of the Danube and the Rhine. A crucifix upon a stone pillar is silhouetted against the snow, and below is cut:

"WASSERSCHEID
ZWISCHEN NORDSEE
SCHWARZEN MEER."

From the frozen summit two small streams quietly trickle down the valleys: one is carried to the north

HALF HOUSE, HALF CHURCH, ITS DOORS OPENED IN WELCOME
THE ARLBERG HOSPICE

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and by the many windings of the Rhine reaches the North Sea: the other flows through the territory of the great white Czar.

A faint sprinkle of snow beat against the glass screen, warning us not to linger, and we plunged down the other side into the beautiful Voralberg.

We regretted leaving the Tirol with all our hearts, many of the pleasantest days had been spent amidst its exquisite scenery and among its happy and sincere people. At Lazen we passed along the repaired road over which the vast mass of *débris* had poured; the result of the enormous landslip in 1892.

As we left the snow above us and descended into the green valley, the sky began to clear and here and there large patches of blue appeared, growing ever larger. Presently the sun burst through the mists, bringing with him summer and compelling us to remove our furs and don lighter clothing. We considered that the Arlberg would be the last of the great passes, little dreaming what fate held in store for us. Feldkirch, the last Austrian town is commanded by the old keep of Schattenburg, and leaving the hills behind us the road enters the valley of the Rhine whose banks here form the frontiers of Switzerland and Austria. The road still skirts the foot of the hills and passes through the little State of Liechtenstein, of which a story is told. The standing army for home defence is said to number three. An order was issued commanding one half of the said standing army for home defence to leave the capital for frontier protection. It was

easy enough to issue the decree, any one could do that, but the carrying out of it presented great objections, very great objections, according to the odd man who formed 33⅓ per cent. of the said army, as several miles divided the frontiers from the capital. History does not say how it was settled or how the standing army was pacified.

Leaving the little State the road crosses the Rhine. At either end of the bridge stands a small house, the respective *douanes*. The Austrians had no money, but gave us an order (save the mark, when referring to Italian orders!) on their office at Buchs, a busy little commercial town at the other side of the valley. On the Swiss side we were stopped by a polite officer, who, with the characteristic businesslike qualities of his race, relieved us of 900 frs. in a little over three minutes and bowed us ceremoniously to the door. At Buchs we halted at the station, and, following instructions, Ken and I went in search of our elusive deposit of 1500 krs. Each office we entered was in the hands of the Swiss, who regarded our quest in the light of a joke and politely but firmly showed us the door. We began to think we were in for another fiasco, when, accosting a heavily-laden porter, he immediately laid down his load and conducted us to the Austrian *douane*, which is situated at the farthest extremity of the station. The Austrian officials on learning our mission requested us to be seated, and retired in consultation. It was a wise request as we soon discovered, for we should have been wearied indeed had we stood until they found the money. We

THE WATERSHED OF THE DANUBE AND THE RHINE
THE ARLBERG SUMMIT

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completely cleared that office of all its ready cash and probably left it in a state of penury for years to come. Drawers were ransacked, canvas and leather bags opened and shut, pockets galore turned out, before the £78 was forthcoming; and when it had been gathered together, what a miscellaneous collection it was; bearing not the slightest resemblance to the seventy-eight shining pieces of gold that the *douanier* on the Stelvio had gloated over. There were German silver and gold, Austrian notes and silver, Italian notes and French gold, all of which took much figuring upon paper before they could be reduced to *kronen*. Gathering it together we bid a final farewell to Austria; the officials insisted on shaking us warmly by the hand, and we, thinking of our recovered deposit, responded no less heartily.

At Sargano the road quits the Rhine and enters into the hills passing along a valley, dotted with old castles and villages perched upon its rocky sides. The little valley brings us to Wallenstadt, a lake lost amidst the mountains, second only to Uri in grandeur; for the mountains plunge down sheer for 3000 feet into the placid green depths, and upon the north side only one tiny hamlet has found a spot on which it is possible to gain even a precarious footing. For some distance the road follows the edge of the lake upon the south side till at Mühlehorn it leaves the waters to climb over the Kerenzenberg, a beautiful and easy drive. Upon the highest point stands Obstalden, a quiet little village with a quaint hotel, overlooking the motion-

less lake a thousand feet beneath. In the little vine-clad house we spent the night. The proprietor had, in his youth, been a sailor, and had brought home some very beautiful ware from the east, and to our surprise we found the table decked out with the majority of his household gods. Out of painted cups, thin as paper, veritable works of art, we drank our tea: from plates beautiful as the sun, whose image they bore, we ate our meat: never before had we to exercise such care, and we were much relieved when the meal came to an end, and the exquisite ware had passed unbroken from our hands.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE FACE OF THE POLICE

In many of the cantons of Switzerland, the Engadine for example, the advent of the automobile is looked upon as a direct misfortune to humanity, and they emphasise the opinion by closing their roads to every form of self-propelled vehicle (and, incidentally, the people who ride in them). "The motorist proposes, but the Swiss Government disposes," is their motto. Other cantons are not so bigoted, and, under restrictions (*vide* the Brünig Pass), throw open a few of their principal roads to cars. Therefore it behoves the motorist to be wary as to what route he maps out, for the punishments upon offending automobilists are said to be exceedingly heavy. *Voilà* our position. We intended to return to Interlaken *en route* for Lac Leman and Geneva. In any case we must pass through Lucerne, and therefore the business in hand was to lay a course to that town, steering clear of the rocks of the different cantons intervening. We might go *viâ* Lake Zuric and Zug, but a far more glorious drive was suggested by the road crossing the Klausen Pass. I called a council of war.

"Baedeker says that cars are strictly forbidden upon the pass, which, according to him, is 'one of the most beautiful of mountain roads,'" I began. "No one seems to know anything about it whatever, even the official at the frontier believed it was open, but was not sure. The question is, shall we go in and risk it or take the other route?"

"It would be a splendid finish to our tour to rush the Klausen," said Sheila mischievously.

"Can't we get permission?" Ken queried.

"Impossible," answered I. "I tried and failed in regard to the Furka and Grimsel."

"I, for one, vote we make the attempt," proposed Dorothy. "We can only be turned back, and we'll go over in full daylight, so there will be no evidence of a deep-laid plot to break the law."

So the motion was carried by a majority of four and we prepared for an adventure. The sun was dispelling the mists from the lake as we left the snug little hotel with its hospitable hosts. The road almost at once commences to descend the thousand feet into the valley, which it reaches at Mollis, near the spot where the plucky inhabitants shook off the Austrian yoke in 1388. At Nafels, a village but a few miles away in the Rautifelder, stand eleven stones commemorating eleven fierce attacks. We had no time to pay a pilgrimage to the beautiful church, for the sun disappeared behind some clouds that came swiftly over the hill tops; they were the forerunners of many others, as though the storm-king was collecting his forces to dispute our passage over the pass. The Klausen is 6500

feet above the sea, 500 feet higher than the Arlberg; and we hurried on, fearful of the coming snow. Glarus, the main village of the Canton lies at the foot of a sugar-loaf mountain, and from here the valley contracts, the hills close in, and the passage is blocked by a range of snowy mountains. Linthal guards the foot of the pass, its spinning-mills standing out picturesquely amidst the green firs upon the wooded slopes. This was the first danger spot; however, no police appeared to stop us as we crawled through its streets. A notice directed us peremptorily to "Die Klausenstrasse."

"Once we get upon the climb, we shall be safe from pursuit," I murmured. The road, directly it leaves the houses, commences to climb, and giving Mercédès her head she bounded up the gradient like a flash. Luckily it was long past the season for tourists, and I had little fear of meeting carriages and other conveyances. At one place the road is continued by means of a tunnel bored through the hard rock, and its sides are pierced into a series of windows forming a large gallery. Ten thousand echoes awoke as we flashed through the rough interior and continued the ascent. The road winds backwards and forwards as it rises, always in full view of the valley. The houses of Linthal appeared like a congregation of white specks, and the shepherds' huts, to which we had gazed upward in wonder from the valley, disappeared beneath us and we looked down upon their roofs. After rising some 2500 feet above Linthal, the road follows a waterfall into the hills

entering the Urner Boden, a dreary marshy valley shut off as it seemed from all communication with the living world. On our right rose a range of jagged peaks completely enclosing one side of the valley. On the other side towered the summit of the Clariden, whose snow-fields and green tinted glaciers were lost in the driving mists. A mighty range of rock blocked the end of the valley, stretching from the snow-fields to the rugged mountains, barring all egress. We seemed to be travelling through a dying world. The people living in huts half buried in the ground appeared almost imbecile, standing stupidly at their sunken doors, gazing at the car with hardly comprehending eyes.

Perhaps it was the misty clouds enveloping the heavens, the fearful stillness in the air, the freezing cold, and the half-light that made the scene so weird and strange. We felt like spirits from another world wandering through the Valley of Death; the awful loneliness and utter helplessness of the people's lives entered into us as we sped over the dismal marsh. In bright sunny weather the pass would wear a very different aspect, but to us it was quite the reverse of sunny or bright; we passed over it in almost semi-darkness and with the knowledge that we might be stopped at any moment, to find the road blocked with stones or snow for the winter. Or, worst of all, should Mercédès fail, we should be stranded in this horrible valley far away from help. Mercédès never fails, we reflected, and felt comforted. A cold wind was blowing, and the thermometer upon the dash quickly fell below zero.

WE FLASHED THROUGH THE ROUGH INTERIOR
THE KLAUSEN PASS

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At one place a dilapidated notice-board, half of which had long since rotted away, announced, in decayed letters, "Motorwägen verboten." With this ominous message ringing in our ears we reached the end of the valley. Here the road enters the well-named "Devil's Cauldron," a wind-swept circle of bare rock, rising 2000 feet sheer into the glaciers. In the Cauldron are brewed the icy waters of the Klus, which roar and thunder as they pour over the precipices. Here

> "The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
> Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,
> Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
> Awful as silence."

At first sight there seems no way out of this *cul-de-sac*, till, on reaching the centre of the Cauldron, the road doubles back upon itself and commences to climb, step by step, up the face of the giant rock. Colder and colder blew the wind; far beneath us we looked down upon the dreary valley, now lost in the gloom, and around us the mists were quickly gathering. A few flakes of snow fell upon the glass screen, and a moment later we were fighting our way through a blinding storm of snow, which continued to rage about us even as we reached the summit, and we wasted no time before commencing the 5000 feet descent to Altdorf.

The snow-storm abated as we descended, soon passing the Klausenpass Hotel, a large square building, shuttered and closed, waiting for summer to come with its attendant crowd of pleasure-seekers.

From the hotel the road descends in one long unbroken slope cut in the mountain side; except for a frail railing there is no protection. Gazing from our seats we looked down a perfectly unbroken drop of 3000 feet. A stone rolled over the road's edge would touch nothing till it reached the green pastures far below in the valley. It was the last place that one would choose to meet a heavy diligence and five prancing horses, and the sensation of being upon the precipice side, with the restive horses and terrified passengers between the car and the rock, would be the reverse of pleasant. However, fate was kind and spared us the diligence. Passing through two rocky tunnels the road again winds back, and continues to descend in the opposite direction. The scenery—that is, what we could see of it—was changed completely. No longer terrifying, it resembled the Simplon, on the Swiss side.

"I don't think the Pass can be forbidden to cars," said Ken; "if it were, we should have been stopped before now."

"I don't know about that," I put in. "Once past Linthal nothing but a bullet could catch us, and up to now we've not seen any telegraph wires, so there is no chance of catching us half-way. It's at Altdorf where our danger lies, for it is sure to be in communication with Linthal, and if we can once get through unseen we shall be perfectly safe."

As I was speaking Sheila gave an exclamation of dismay, and called out to us to look down the hill. Upon one of the returning zigzags were two men hurriedly dragging branches of trees and pulling

carts across the road, and my heart sank as I recognised that one of them wore the green hat of the Swiss gendarme. "Caught," we exclaimed together, and, as though in sympathy, rain commenced to fall in torrents. Turning a corner we came in sight of the barricade, and the man under the green hat held up his hand. I stopped Mercédès, and the official, coming up, informed us in a loud voice that we had broken the law and must pay 50 francs. I was about to comply, when Ken interrupted and asked for a receipt. This caused trouble; the official wanted the money but not to give a receipt, and we entered into a very elevating argument. St. Christophe was kind and victory rested with us, the official retiring into his hut to write out a receipt.

"I don't think they've had any warning, sir," said Dennis. "There's no telegraph wires and the fellow must have seen us unexpectedly, for he's still got his slippers on."

This proved to be the truth for the green cap was the only piece of uniform the official had had time to don. At last the receipt was made out, the money changed hands, and the barricade was removed. Some little distance down the road we came upon two other men busy removing another wooden obstruction, evidently placed there in case we had rushed the first. We congratulated ourselves that we had got off so easily, but Altdorf was yet to be passed, and we looked forward to some lively entertainment. The rain ceased and if the sun did not actually shine, it did its very best to burst through the clouds. The valley through whose clutches we

were slipping was beautiful in the extreme. Firs and pines spread themselves out like warm blankets over the precipitous hillsides. The road, splendidly made, followed a roaring torrent whose water sprang in great bounds from one huge boulder to another. Those people whom we met seemed quite dazed at our sudden appearance, and stared in evident astonishment at the unusual sight. Passing through Burglen, the home of Tell, the valley joins the main road from the Gotthard, up which we had passed a few months before,—that road which gave us our first insight into the real beauties of the Alps.

Now came the most sporting time of the whole drive, — our passage through Altdorf. If the authorities of Linthal had telegraphed the news of our journey, as I feared, we might be detained and dragged into a knot of annoying red-tapism.

Altdorf lay like a watchful sentinel in our path, and, endeavouring to look as law-abiding and unconscious as possible, we put a bold face upon the matter and entered its familiar streets. At Tell's tower the road takes a sharp turn to the left and at the corner stood a stately gendarme. We held our breath, but, wonder of wonders, he moved politely to one side, and we breathed again. Our joy was short-lived, for on rounding the corner we were treated to a startling surprise. In the middle of the road stood four or five resolute policemen, and around them waited, in expectant attitudes, a large and varied crowd. Evidently the police at Linthal had telegraphed; and the news had spread that an

automobile had rushed the forbidden Klausen, for every one appeared to have turned out to see the fun. Shops were deserted, carts and fruit-stalls left unattended in the roadway. Even two peasants driving a herd of goats and sheep had halted with their animals to swell the already numerous crowd.

There was no need for the uplifted hands of the police, and I pulled up at once at the spot indicated and we found ourselves opposite the police station. The foremost gendarme, a fine, well-built man, came up to us, and saluting gravely, asked, "Is yours the automobile that has come from Linthal over the Klausenstrasse?"

I saluted back, and answered in the voice of a prisoner pleading guilty to murder, "It is."

"Then will the owner of the automobile be pleased to follow me into the Bureau?" he then said.

"The owner will not be pleased," I murmured, as I descended and followed him into the office, Ken following me.

"Do you know that you have broken a most strict law?" the gendarme asked, when he had carefully closed the door, turning to us and standing with his back to it. "You have travelled with your automobile over the Klausenstrasse, a pass which is most strictly forbidden to automobiles. Are you aware of the heinous act you have committed, and the penalties that you have exposed yourself to?"

"There was no notice to warn us," I argued. "We passed through Glarus and Linthal and we

were never even cautioned. Surely it was not our fault." Here I waxed indignant. "Where were the Linthal police that they did not stop us? It is not they, but we, who should complain. Here we have unknowingly broken one of your very reasonable laws. It is not our fault, but theirs."

The gendarme was a man of sense. "You are right," he said. "You should have been warned; but there is a notice half-way up the pass."

"There are the remains of one, but it is almost illegible, and we took no notice of it," Ken interrupted.

"Still, you have come over the pass in your automobile," the gendarme said severely. "Your case has been considered by the authorities of the two cantons, but as you were not warned the fine of 600 frs. and detention has been commuted to 200 frs. Personally I am sorry to detain you, but unless you pay I shall be forced to keep you here."

"200 frs.," I remarked to Ken, in English, *sotto voce*. "200 frs., not another blessed thing, oh joy! We have already paid 50 frs. to an officer who stopped us upon the road," I said, turning to the gendarme, and producing the receipt. To our amazement he promptly deducted it from the fine, and presented his account for 150 frs. which I instantly paid. Duty done, the officer became confidential. "You have had a most lucky escape," he began, accepting a cigarette from Ken, "for had it been proved that you knew the Pass was closed to automobiles the punishment would have been

very different. To my knowledge yours is the only automobile that has come over the Pass."

"The honour is very cheap at 200 frs.," I added, when he had finished speaking. He smiled and after passing a few compliments, declared we were free to proceed. Shaking hands, he conducted us outside, where, at his command, the military police cleared a path in the crowd, and, through a living lane of people anxious to catch a glimpse, we reached Mercédès.

"200 frs. and freedom!" I announced, and Sheila and Dorothy's faces showed how welcome was the news. There was a hum of excitement as Dennis started the engine, the police saluted, the crowd cheered, Ken played a fal-de-da on the horn, and we waved our hands as we glided along the cobbled street.

A lovely run along the rocky Axenstrasse, by the side of the lake of Uri brought us to Brunnen and to the Hotel of the four Cantons, and as we dismounted at the door we finished the most exciting day's run of the tour.

Sitting at dinner that evening we could scarcely realise the adventures of the day, and, as a last toast, drank to the success which had attended our journey, over the magnificent but forbidden Klausen.

We were glad to rest a few days in sunny Brunnen. The town is beautifully situated, looking at the same time over the lake towards Lucerne and into the fastness of the Gotthard. One brilliant morning when summer had returned we were again

en route for Interlaken. Lucerne was soon a memory behind us and we commenced the easy climb over the Brünig pass. The scenery was exceedingly tame after what we had passed through, and the absurd police regulations made the climb extremely tedious. At the little inn by the wayside we stopped to receive a permit from the same woman still sewing to the loud ticking of the same cuckoo-clock we had seen before upon the shelf. After frequently halting we reached the summit, delivered up the permit, and descended to Brienz, keeping to the good main road and passing the smaller one which leads to Meiringen, whose falls brought back vivid memories. At Brienz we joined the lake and followed its edge to Interlaken, where we spent only a few days, and then left for Lac Leman. The morning was as fine as the scenery through which we passed. After following the left-hand side of the lake of Thun the road branches to the left, running along a thickly-wooded valley. As we approached the pretty chalets of Saamen we opened out a range of snow-capped peaks on our left. It was Sunday and the villages were bright and gay, crowded as they were with the quaintly dressed peasants, the women in their characteristic costume, the men in short black coats with absurdly small sleeves terminating above the elbow and tied with coloured ribbons. At Gestig the road climbs over the easy Col du Pillon, some five thousand feet high, through thick woods and pasture lands. The snow level was almost reached when the road commenced to descend, and we knew we had passed the summit.

The descent was the pick of the day's drive, the road descending through a landscape dotted with countless wooden chalets with their steep overhanging roofs and numerous balconies. The road follows down one side of a deep winding gorge very beautiful at places, and as it opens out reveals the verdant Rhone Valley far below, down to which it quietly creeps. We spent the night at Aigle, the little town at the foot of the pass, where

> ". . . the Rhone
> Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne."

The vast expanse of Lac Leman was heavy yet with mists as we reached its historical waters and beheld the little Ile de Peilz mirrored upon the still lake. The massive walls of Chillon jutting out into the water tempted us to stop long enough to revisit its "dungeons deep and old." We were delighted to return to the warm sunshine and pure air and be once more spinning over the open road. Vevey, Montreux, Lausanne, with their incessant streams of visitors, and a host of smaller places flew past and we approached Geneva.

Across the lake we could see the cold clear summit of Mont Blanc illuminated by the sunset. It was one of those phenomenally clear evenings when distant objects appear to be quite close, and the Queen of the Alps seemed almost within reach.

Next morning we set out on our last climb—the Col de la Faucille, 4000 feet, over the Jura mountains. The Swiss returned, at once, the 900 francs,

and a few miles further we were admitted back into France on production of our carefully carried *passavant*. A beautiful and very easy climb followed, the road rising gently till it reaches the highest point, where we dismounted for a last look at Switzerland. The scene that spread itself before us was indeed worthy of the country we were leaving. The whole range of the Mont-Blanc Alps stood out bright and imposing above the clouds that separated them from the lake, snow, ice, pine, and lake, the essence of Switzerland, and to their beauties we bid *au-revoir*. As we continued our way we noticed that in the shadow of the rocks where the sun's rays could not penetrate, hung icicles in profusion, bearing eloquent testimony to the perishing cold of the nights. A long descent followed through Chezéry to the little lake of Nantua, whose clear water is turned into ice by the busy works upon its banks, packed in vans, and sent to Paris and all over the Continent.

A motoring friend had told me that the road from Nantua to Bourg, *viâ* Serrières and Ceyzériat, was very hilly and impossible for any heavy car. I had smiled at this, with the result that I pledged myself when in the neighbourhood to traverse the road or die in the attempt. Upon the map it is marked "Route impraticable," but that was not likely to affect Mercédès. If the road was only solid, the steeper the hill the better she was pleased. From the lake a flat road leads to the climb, if it can be called a climb; the rise is not more than a thousand feet and the road is good, presenting no

difficulties. I only wished my friend had been there to see us shoot up the incline. Two switch-back hills the road crossed, and between them runs the gentle Ain. While at Bourg we visited the fine old church, immortalised by Matthew Arnold.

Ken proposed that we should renew our acquaintance with the château country, and we prepared ourselves for a race across France—dear old familiar France, ever the same cultivated lands as far as the eye can reach, the same peasants working in the fields, always the same interminable double line of tall graceful poplars edging the road, and the road itself disappearing in one long unending ribbon beneath the bonnet as Mercédès rushed onward, for ever trying to reach the far horizon. There was very little traffic and we made good progress, travelling at a fairly high speed over the many deserted stretches.

Ken, I ought here to say, took the wheel, and after a few lessons handled Mercédès like an expert.

The château country we enjoyed, revisiting nearly all its old castles, and one morning late in October started on our last run. A few hours brought us to Paris, entering the gay capital by the Bois de Boulogne, thus bringing to a successful conclusion our ideal Alpine tour.

At dinner that evening we were all a little quiet —each was sorry that the tour had ended. We had so many pleasant memories and recollections to look back upon, undimmed by any accident. While we were voicing our regrets at the ending of the tour, I seized the opportunity of proposing that we should

start again the first week in December for another tour—a tour which had been forming in my mind for the last month—that of a visit to Rome and the old cities of Italy. In glowing terms I depicted the beauties of the South as seen by car. "You must come," I urged. "I shall never enjoy the car by myself after this last tour; I should feel utterly miserable and lonely."

"But you'll have to be by yourself some day," laughed Ken.

"I hope not," I answered, looking earnestly at Sheila, who met my gaze and smiled.

"Unfortunately we've arranged to winter in town," Dorothy said, "though I'd rather exchange it for the free and open life of the car."

"You've two months in which to alter your engagements," I pleaded. "This time Mercédès will show you the home of the Cæsars, the birthplace of Roman legions. What do *you* say, Sheila?" I eagerly asked, turning to her.

Sheila looked at me, and there was no mistaking her answer as she replied, "It would be heavenly to visit Rome with Mercédès—and you."

"That settles it," I cried exultantly. "You *must* come after that; Sheila has set her heart on it, and I will take no denial. Fill your glasses, and this time drink *my* toast: 'May the coming tour be as happy and successful as the one that has ended to-day.'"

PART II

SOUTHERN EUROPE

MAP II.—SOUTHERN EUROPE.

List of towns in order.

Paris : Lyons : Avignon : Aix : Cannes : Nice : Monaco (Italian frontier) : San Remo : Genoa : Spezia : Pisa : Grosetto : Civitavecchia : Rome : Tivoli : Rome : Terrachina : Geita : Rome : Todi : Perugia : Florence : Bologna : Padua : Mestre : Venice : Padua : Verona : Brescia : Bergamo : Lecco : Como : Milan : Genoa : Nice (French frontier) : Aix : Avignon : Nimes : Tarasçon : Arles : Narbonne : Béziers : Carcassonne : Toulouse : Tarbes : Lourdes : Pyrenées : Gavarnie : Lourdes : Cauteret : Lourdes : Pau : Orthez : San Jean pied du port (Spanish frontier) : *Roncesvalles Pass* : Pamplona : Vitoria : Burgos : Valladolid : Segovia : *Guadarrama Pass* : Madrid : Toledo : Talavera : Navalmoral : Trujillo : Merida : Seville : Jerez : Cadiz : Cape Tarifa : Algeciras : Gibraltar : Ronda : Loja : Granada : Jaěn : Ubeda : Albacete : Valencia : Barcelona (French frontier) : Perpignan : Béziers : Millau : Gorges du Tarn : St. Fleur : Clermont-Ferrand : Paris : Boulogne : Folkestone : London.

NOTE. Map II.

For detail of Route through North Italy see dotted green line Map I. (p. 2).

MAP II

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CHAPTER X

TO THE HOME OF THE CÆSARS

THE two months intervening before the next tour passed quickly. Ken, Dorothy and Sheila returned to Graham Castle, while I went home and stayed with my people in Sussex. Early in December I set out for the North, and, after a tedious journey, arrived at Graham Castle, now deep in snow, glad to reach its welcome doors. As we knew that we should spend some time on the Riviera and at Rome we were able to despatch our heavy luggage there to await our arrival; and the trunks we carried on the car were not nearly so tightly crammed as on our last tour, when we had been quite uncertain as to the next stopping-place, and consequently compelled to carry clothing for nearly four months.

A week later we started. This time we did not drive to the station in Ken's pair 'bus, but covered the fifteen miles through the snow in the prescribed forty-five minutes in the 45-h.p. Mercédès double Limousine that I had advised him to purchase for station work. He had at first wished to bring this car on the present tour, but I objected, and pointed out how much nicer and snugger it was for all of us

to be on the same auto, and also that we did not wish to be detained by his heavy machine, for although mine had nearly double the power it weighed no more.

Paris in December is not a place to linger in; the city wore a totally different aspect to what it did on our last visit, its streets now being swept by icy blasts and the leaden sky threatening continually to pour down snow and sleet. Mercédès had been in the hands of the coachbuilders again, and looked fresh and new; the sight of her, with Dennis, brought back vividly the recollections of our dash through the Alps, and we longed to be once more *en route*. As we mounted to our seats, and arranged the rugs about us, we drew up the collars of our fur coats and shivered, so biting cold was the air. A few snow flakes fell in a christening shower upon Mercédès as we hurried away in search of the Riviera—and summer.

Following the deserted embankment, we crossed over the Pont Neuf, passing close to the doors of blackened Notre Dame, whose wind-swept towers stand like two silent sentinels above the black depths of the Seine. A few luckless, half-starved pedestrians hurried along, hugging the shop windows for warmth and shelter from the penetrating wind. Heavy clouds encircled the the Eiffel Tower. What snow had fallen had now been churned into slush and mud, splashing from beneath our wheels in every direction. The chairs and tables outside the *cafés* had vanished, every door was shut and fastened against the elements. Altogether it was Paris at

its worst—cold, grey, pitiless, in the dread grip of winter.

At the end of the Avenue de Choisy we passed through the Gates of Paris, and again the open road was flowing rapidly beneath us. One of the joys of Mercédès is the fact that nothing seems to affect her speed. Although she was now in full touring rig, with as much luggage as she would carry, with the usual multitude of spares, extra covers, and inner-tubes, the wind-screen down, and her full complement of passengers, the difference in her pace was imperceptible. The two months' rest appeared to have filled her with a longing to show her appreciation of again being free; she literally ate up the kilometres, and her pleasure on encountering a hill was only equalled by the way in which she devoured it. Her joy was shared by us all, for once the auto-microbe has really entered into your blood there is no getting it out again, and we were keener on the sport than ever. Dorothy and Ken sat in the tonneau, and I had Sheila next to me. Dennis, as usual, was curled up behind the dash, at Sheila's feet, "Not, by a long way," as Ken put it, "the first man to reach that position."

Slowing down to pass through Sens, we caught but a glimpse of its fine old cathedral, where once a heathen temple stood, and as we left the town settled ourselves into our seats and prepared for a quick journey through France.

The direct road from Paris to the Riviera is too well known to be described here: we followed the beaten track traversed by hundreds of cars all

doing exactly the same thing. The Paris-Avignon road is by no means a fair sample of the Routes Nationales of France, and it is little wonder so many people who pass only over that route take back with them but poor recollections of the French roads. A spin along the Paris-Bordeaux, Paris-Nancy, or best of all the Paris-St. Fleur-Perpignan routes, will illustrate what I mean. - It was late in the evening of the third day from Paris when we reached the historic battlements of Avignon, tyre troubles having been in our midst between there and Lyons. There were twelve other cars in the garage of the hotel, and Mercédès could scarce find room in which to squeeze her white form, so crowded was this route to the Riviera.

The wind was still blowing keenly as we sailed out of Avignon : winter yet hung in the air, spreading its white sheet over the landscape and we congratulated ourselves that the evening would find us in the sunny Riviera. The road was in excellent condition, and like a bullet we flew over its perfect surface, Mercédès emitting a low hum that was music to our ears. At Aix we slowed down to pass through its broad streets, then again gave ourselves into the arms of the goddess Speed. After a few moments' breathing time at Brignolles, and until the old Amphitheatre at Fréjus came into view, we had an hour's uninterrupted spin over the most tempting of roads and against the most biting of winds. A few moments after passing the Roman remains we were crossing the old town of Fréjus, coming into view of the blue waters of the Mediter-

ranean. There is a choice of two roads to Cannes: one crosses the Esterel, the other follows the coast. Of the two, I prefer the first, as the latter is rather tedious and narrow. We took the former, and leaving Fréjus beneath us, sped up the extremely easy road. The scenery is beautiful, and reaching the summit, we commenced the descent into Cannes —and summer. Had a fairy waved her wand over the scene, a greater change could not have been wrought. Gone was the road hard with frost, gone the icicles hanging upon the banks of the wayside, gone the half-foggy air and piercing cold, gone was winter entirely. The sun, low down in the west, shot forth a myriad of golden beams which spread themselves out over a beautiful landscape, some lighting up the stately palms and throwing their shadows, lengthened ten times, upon the ground beneath, others playing joyfully upon the blue ocean, dancing from wave to wave, touching each with fire as they passed. It was the perfect evening of a glorious day, one of those days that the Riviera enjoys while other places are desolate and shivering in the cold.

It would be useless to chronicle the few weeks we spent on the Riviera: to none of us were its attractions new. At Cannes, Nice, Monaco and Cap Martin we stayed, finally coming to rest at the Hôtel de Paris, Monte Carlo, in close proximity to the Casino. When one has really had a taste of touring *en auto*, it is strange what a difference it makes: one gets positively to dislike towns and crowded pleasure centres, and to sigh for the

freedom of the open road. This we soon discovered, and it was with little sorrow that we bid good-bye to the gaieties of the Riviera. One brilliant morning we started: leaving the little principality below us, we climbed up the zigzag road which joins the upper Cornich road from Nice to Mentone. It is a pleasant climb, and the view looking down at the tiny kingdom very beautiful. A long gentle coast brought us to sunny Mentone, where we obtained a *passavant*. Climbing, the road rises quickly and crosses the narrow gorge which separates France and Italy. The Italian *douane*, a little white house, standing upon a bend in the road, compelled us to stop and deposit the usual 600 frs. and wait patiently until the receipt was made out. As we stood outside the *douane* the sun blazed down upon Mercédès mercilessly, and we blessed the canopy for keeping off the scorching rays. A slow-moving official affixed a seal to one of the front springs, and, saluting, bid us depart.

The road from Mentone to Genoa is one of the most beautiful drives imaginable. It passes through one long fairyland of beauty, following the broken coast fringed with lofty palm trees; cacti and aloe plants entwine themselves amongst the hedges; olive groves, date palms, orange and lemon trees rise in mixed profusion, and the ground is covered with brilliant flowers. A cooling breeze comes from the sea, whose blue expanse fringes the coast with a glittering edge of white spray. Far out on the horizon rises hilly Corsica, her rough shape blurred by the haze. The sky vies with the waters in depth

of colour and spurns every cloud from its face. This is Italy at her sweetest and best, sleepy Italy in all her beauty and charm; the Italy where Garibaldi spent his childhood playing upon these steep hills, when he could escape from the lessons he hated, or swimming far out in the cool waters.

Soon we passed Bordighera with its stately palms, reaching San Remo, where we particularly wished to stay in order to visit the intricacies of the old town. Very curious is the old town, a cataract of houses pouring down a hill: house built above house, with streets stony, narrow and almost perpendicular. The dark houses are joined one to the other in arches, beneath which the streets pass: the whole forming a maze of narrow passages and treacherous alleys. If the narrow streets are dark, they are cool; the blazing sun seldom penetrates into their secrets, and, as Symonds says, "one learns the meaning of the Italian word 'uggia' from their cold and gloom." Here children play undisturbed; old women aged and shrivelled sit knitting on the doorsteps shouting to one another or at the children in the gutters. A few fruit-stalls stand close against the walls, their owners sprawling upon the cobbled pavement smoking the interminable cigarette and chatting. Now and then the children scatter to allow a donkey, burdened with wood, to be led past. Almost at every corner are placed little shrines, some built, others hollowed in the walls, and before each a bunch of fresh flowers showing that some one has not forgotten the Creator of this quaint little spot, a

hundred years behind the times. Upon the summit of the pouring mass of houses we came into an open space, from which one can view the luxurious country around. Crossing the small square we were again in the winding streets. There was nothing to show the way, but taking as our guide the street at the steepest angle, we passed through a labyrinth of breakneck descents and emerged upon the palm-strewn front. Mixing with the brightly-dressed crowds of visitors are the dark uniforms and strange head-dresses of the Bersagliere, that regiment which vied with Garibaldi's legion in bravery and reckless courage during the defence of Rome, and throughout the great work of the Liberation of Italy.

Next morning we resumed our drive along the Riviera di Leanti, passing the large white Casino; the road and the railway run neck and neck, crossing each other times without number and causing us many delays. At one crossing we ran into the centre of a collection of mule waggons whose animals commenced to shy violently at the sound of Mercédès, unceremoniously waking their drivers who were taking a siesta inside. I stopped the engine and the panic slowly subsided. There were mules to right, to left, in front and behind us; we were hemmed in by mules as we sat stewing in the heat waiting for the train. The mule drivers took a dreamy interest in us for a few moments, but soon again dropped off to sleep. Fifteen minutes passed, and still no sign of the train: a few more carts arrived, taking their places at the rear of the

mule waggons. Presently the official of the crossing (a woman, as without exception was every one we saw), dressed in a long brown coat, and wearing a dusty pot-hat of ancient design, came out of her hut. Gazing up and down the line, she lifted a large cow-horn to her lips and we braced ourselves for a shock. Instead of the deafening blast we expected from its size, there issued only a faint squeak: at this the mule drivers opened one eye for a moment, then with one accord closed it and resumed their nap. In the distance we could hear the chut-chut of the train, and soon we espied it laboriously approaching. At last it rumbled past, the fireman sitting on the tender cooling himself, and the passengers with their heads from the windows striving to obtain some fresh air. As soon as it had passed, back went the gates and simultaneously forward went the procession of carts. Dennis started the engine and broke up the formation of the mule-squad. By miraculous luck we avoided being telescoped by the tail end of the carts in front, at the same time dodged those behind, and accelerating got ahead of the first mule, who, doubtless for the first time in his life, was trotting at a good round pace in spite of the abuse hurled at him by his driver. Quickly leaving the disturbance behind, we sped along the road in the same direction as that taken by the train: rounding a sharp turn, we found that the shining lines and road lay side by side for quite a good distance, and the train was about halfway along the stretch. The road was clear of traffic, and in

a few moments we had caught up the train, to the great delight of the passengers who hailed our appearance as a godsend from the monotony. Even the fireman roused himself sufficiently to wave his hand benignly as we forged alongside. As Sheila waved her handkerchief in reply to the dozens fluttering from the excited passengers, I put on the spurt, and we left the train as though it were standing still. Rounding another corner five minutes later, we came upon a level crossing, the lady official resolutely refusing to open the gates, and were compelled to wait as patiently as we could until the train with its load of jeering passengers and now jubilant fireman had passed.

Then the villages we traversed added an extra charm to the journey, with their streets so narrow that we doubted if Mercédès could squeeze through. People meeting us in these narrow ways faded quickly into convenient doorways, shouting a cheery welcome as we glided past, all but touching their sunburnt faces. Children playing heedless of the traffic escaped by a miracle from beneath the wheels of wine-carts and barrows, or the feet of mules passing along the street. At one place, where the houses on either hand joined at the first floor and formed a cool archway, we came upon a fruit barrow blocking the way. Stopping Mercédès we were at once surrounded by a crowd of children who sprawled all over the car. Attracted by the noise, the owner of the stall appeared, and, when the solution to the situation sank into his mind, leisurely backed the barrow up a side street leaving just enough

THAT DRIVE TO GENOA WAS LIKE A DREAM

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room to scrape past. At a pace that would have disgraced a snail we crawled through the narrow crowded street, escorted by the running tumbling collection of children who followed persistently, and endeavoured to climb on to the luggage behind and write their names on the highly finished panels of the tonneau. Once clear of the town, we got free of our escort by the simple process of opening the throttle.

That drive to Genoa was like a dream, a mirage of beautiful views: brown rocky headlands covered with carpets of flowers, jutting far out into a sea of lapis-lazuli which beats continuously against their hard sides, fringing the coast with white. Here and there pretty little cottages nestle snugly in the midst of the luxurious vegetation, specks of white against a dense background of green. Of Savona, with its modern front, we have but little remembrance. About halfway between here and Genoa we passed through Cogoleto, a little village that divides with Genoa the honour of being the birthplace of Columbus. Like Genoa it possesses a house in which the different enthusiasts proudly and emphatically declare the discoverer of America first saw the light.

As evening approached, our enchanted eyes rested upon the lighthouse at the end of the cape that shelters Genoa. Once past the beacon our dream developed into a nightmare of some ten kilometres of heavy traffic and badly cut up roads. Twisting our way between the heavy loads of wood and the electric trams, we followed a tortuous course, and the sight of the hotel door was very welcome.

Next day we spent in the city. Genoa's magni ficent harbour looks better from the sea than from the land, but is a sight worth seeing from either. After breakfast we drove to the Campo Santo, where we spent the morning. How quaint and sadly beautiful it is to wander through the long corridors where, in notches in the wall, are buried, or rather hermetically sealed, the bodies of the dead. Some of the tombs are very fine, many being in the form of miniature temples standing by themselves; others, in the arcades, are very massive and surrounded by exquisite sculpture, a statue or bust of the deceased occupying the centre. Poorer graves have only a plain slab of marble, and in place of the sculpture merely a pathetic photo of the dead. But each, rich or poor, is well cared for; fresh flowers, whose perfume scents the air, are brought by loving hands, and the quiet black-draped figures of the mourners carrying fresh offerings, show that the dear ones will never be forgotten or their last resting-place allowed to fall into ruin and decay.

From the Campo Santo we returned to the hotel, passing on the way the small dilapidated house, lost in a narrow street, which the enthusiasts of Genoa point out as the one and only birthplace of the distinguished Christopher.

The following morning we were early on the road, quickly leaving the busy traffic, and following the sparkling coast; village after village was passed, nestling between the blue waters and the green hills. After Recco the road takes it into its head to climb high into the mountains, losing sight of the

WE CRAWLED THROUGH THE NARROW STREETS

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sea till, like a woman ("that's a libel," says Dorothy), it changes its mind and swoops back to the rocky shore. At Sestri the train vanishes into the hills, and for twenty miles tunnel succeeds tunnel; here the automobilist again scores, for the road turns its back to the coast and winds upwards into the hills, climbing in easy sweeps through the rich vegetation, now and then in full view of the glorious sea, till it reaches the Col di Bracca, 2000 feet above. Before us stretched range after range of beautiful mountains, the winding road lost in their midst. For some distance the road continues upon the high level, till, on rounding one of the gentle turns we come in sight of the sea and behold Spezia 700 feet beneath us, its spacious harbour dotted with ships of war. The descent is most enjoyable, the road twisting back upon itself in many easy turns before it reached the water's level, and we were gliding along the bright front sheltered with palms. We lunched at the Croce di Malta, a smart hotel possessing a remarkable double staircase somewhat confusing when traversed for the first time, or so I should imagine, to those retiring from the festive board after a prolonged jollification, in the early hours of the morning. Spezia almost tempted us to stay, but Mercédès seemed to murmur "Pisa" in our ears and urge us onward.

We had been warned that the road from Spezia to Pisa enjoyed the ominous reputation of being the worst in Italy, because it passes close to the Carrara marble mines and is badly cut up with traffic. This is only too true; the road delights in

a collection of deep and deceitful gutters, whose erratic courses forbid anything above the second speed. To our left, amidst the green foliage, we caught a glimpse once or twice of the white quarries, and often we met or passed oxen patiently dragging heavy flat carts, on which reposed a massive block of uncut marble. But nothing could damp our expectations of Pisa; the name itself seems to bring back visions of the leaning tower seen long ago in stereoscopic views or old illustrated books.

Why, I wonder, is every one brought up with the one idea that in Pisa there is but the one thing to see—the Tower? Directly one enters the gates, all former visions vanish, and new ones take their place, never to be forgotten. As we entered the gateway through the high walls we found ourselves in a quiet isolated square, facing the four glories of Pisa. Nearest to us stood the round Baptistery, beside it the Cathedral, and beyond that the slanting Campanile; to the left, in the background, is the famous Campo Santo: pure and white they stand as though finished but yesterday. Surely marble never seemed so lovely before!

We halted Mercédès at the foot of the Leaning Tower. It stands about 180 feet high and is fourteen feet out of the perpendicular; the interior is hollow and forms one large slanting tube; in the encircling walls the staircase is cut, thus travelling round and round the hollow centre. The climb up the staircase has a most peculiar effect and is rather puzzling at first. After struggling up some twenty steps one finds that one is almost running up the

WE FOUND OURSELVES FACING THE GLORIES OF PISA

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next twenty, for although one is climbing upstairs yet in reality it is almost level. The same descending, at one moment you nearly pitch on your head, the next you find it hard work to walk down stairs up-hill. (It sounds Irish, but it's a fact.) On many people the result is something after the nature of sea-sickness. From the summit a good view is obtained, but on looking over the edge of the parapet on the overhanging side it was impossible to see the car, though Mercédès was standing at the foot of the column immediately beneath us.

Luckily, none of us suffered from the magic of the "drunken tower" as Ken called it. When we had almost reached the bottom I called to Dennis to come, as I wished to let him have a try at the climb. Really it was one of the most amusing sights imaginable; he started to climb rapidly up the steps, which are just out of the perpendicular, and as he came into view of us the ascending stairs sloped till they were almost down hill. The result was unexpected. With a cry of astonishment he involuntarily doubled his pace, landing eventually upon his hands and knees. As he sat on the stones he glanced at his surroundings with a puzzled expression so irresistibly comical, that we burst into laughter and nearly came to grief ourselves. The Cathedral, the Baptistery and the Campo Santo we left unvisited until next day, and drove to an hotel upon the Lung'arno overlooking the quick stream. The next morning we spent viewing the interiors—the Cathedral, with its divine façade;

the Baptistery, with its magnificent pulpit and wonderful echo in its round interior, our guide imitating a perfect organ chord by crying the notes one after the other, the whole combining in splendid harmony and echoing in volume high up in the domed roof. Of the Campo Santo and its fifty-three shiploads of soil brought from Jerusalem, of its beautiful arcades, choice frescoes and sculpture, let the guide-books speak. Whatever sights we are fated to enjoy, nothing can dim those first impressions of Pisa, or overshadow the remembrances we carried away.

From Pisa we took a wrong turn and instead of passing through Leghorn wandered over an uninteresting waste of land separated from the water by low lines of sandhills. Tall eucalyptus trees, which for many years fought against malaria, grew in melancholy loneliness. At Follonica the road almost touches the sea near Cala Martina, that spot from which Garibaldi embarked on September 2, 1849, after his heroic defence of Rome, his terrible retreat and the tragic death of Anita: where he left his beloved country and faithful comrades: and standing in the boat that was to carry him into exile cried "Viva l'Italia," the cry that years later he was destined to make ring throughout Europe by the deeds of his final triumph.

All day long we passed through similar country. Once as we rounded a ridge of sandy mounds at a good speed, I saw in a flash that the road ended suddenly in a good sized river. The shout from Ken was not needed to urge me to apply all

WE HALTED MERCÉDÈS AT THE FOOT OF THE LEANING TOWER

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brakes, and we pulled up within a few feet of the water. There had been no notice to warn us to slacken speed, and I fervently blessed the solid brakes that had held Mercédès back from a watery grave. Across the river a wire was stretched, and we perceived that a flat-bottomed boat was making its way from the other bank. On to this we drove and were ferried across. A few moments after we had left the ferry we came upon a similar crossing and proceeded in future more cautiously. At Civita-vecchia we touched the sea, only to leave it directly after and head straight for Rome, following the march of that army of France, the army that a republic once sent to stop the growth of a baby sister republic and wrest from the Italian Patriots and Heroes the Eternal City, delivering them and Italy back to the abortive rule of the Black Cassock. The road now formed a series of switch-backs, and long ere we reached the City our eyes were strained to be the first to sight Rome. "There it is," cried Sheila excitedly, as we reached the summit of one of the hills. Far away on the horizon glittered a great dome in the sunshine. "St. Peter's," we exclaimed together.

I had purposely chosen this road so as to enter Rome by the Porta Cavaleggieri, in order to give Sheila the Rome of her dreams for a first impression of the Eternal City. I remember how disappointed I had felt on first reaching Rome; coming from Perugia we entered by the Porto del Popolo which opens into modern Rome. I could scarcely believe that it was Rome, so like any other town did it

look; and as Sheila had spoken with such rapture and longing of the real Rome I determined she should not be disappointed. Reaching the walls surrounding the Vatican, we passed through the Porta Cavaleggiere beneath the Taliculum, that part of Rome which under Garibaldi and his hero-comrades created the latest page in the history of the immortal city. Quitting the Papal walls we passed beneath the shadow of a massive colonnade of marble pillars emerging in the great open Piazza before the doors of St. Peter's, and halted for a moment beside the Egyptian obelisk. Sheila drew in her breath with a gasp and clutched my arm. "Oh Roy!" she murmured, and was silent; but that "Oh" expressed her thoughts more than any volume of words could have done. Passing the beautiful old Fort of St. Angelo, we crossed Father Tiber by the statue-embellished bridge above its flowing waters.

"And this is the Eternal City," breathed Sheila in my ear.

"Look there," I replied, stopping Mercédès. "Isn't that the Rome of your dreams," and I pointed across the Tiber. We were high above the swift grey river across which stretched the statued bridge leading to St. Angelo, and silhouetted against a glowing sky of gold rose the massive dome of the father of churches.

"Yes," said Sheila slowly, as her eyes took in the scene, monument after monument. "Yes, that's Rome. But stay, there's one thing missing—the Coliseum. I couldn't think of Rome without

WE WERE FERRIED ACROSS
NEAR ROME

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its memory rising like a ghost in the background."

"Then you shall see it now," I answered quickly, and in a moment Mercédès was gliding along the embankment and turned at right angles to the Tiber, plunging into a maze of narrow streets. "The Pantheon," I announced as we paused before the sixteen granite columns which support its massive front. Again we dived into the narrow streets and threaded our way into south, and ancient Rome. I was pleased to find that my memory of the intricate knot of old streets in this quarter remained clear, and save for one slight slip I was able to steer Mercédès without a mistake through one narrow street after another, and emerge this time beside a ruined arch.

"The Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus, the ruined Forum, and the Palatine, the home of the Cæsars," I said waving my hand in introduction.

"This, this *is* Rome," cried Sheila in ecstasy. "How wonderful it all seems, almost like a dream."

Passing along the edge of the Forum in full view of the ruined temples, we glided between the Palatine and the Circus Maximus, and, turning to the left, entered an avenue sheltered by spreading trees.

"That's the Arch of Constantine," Sheila cried, as we came in sight of the perfect structure, and driving beneath it a cry burst from her as we beheld the Coliseum.

Dickens in his "Pictures from Italy" tells in a few beautiful words his first impression of it. "To see it crumbling there, an inch a year," he says; "its walls and arches overgrown with green; its corridors open to the day; the long grass growing in its porches; young trees of yesterday, springing up on its ragged parapets, and bearing fruit: chance produce of the seeds dropped there by the birds who build their nests within its crinks and crannies; to see its Pit of Fight filled up with earth, and the peaceful cross planted in the centre: to climb into its upper halls, and look down on ruin, ruin, all about it; the triumphal arches of Constantine, Septimius Severus, and Titus; the Roman Forum; the Palace of the Cæsars; the temples of the old religion, fallen down and gone; is to see the ghost of old Rome, wicked, wonderful old city, haunting the very ground on which its people trod. It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart, as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. God be thanked: a ruin!

"As it tops the other ruins, standing there, a mountain among graves: so do its ancient influences outlive all other remnants of the old mythology and old butchery of Rome, in the nature of the fierce and cruel Roman people."

It was rapidly growing dark, already the vast interior was deep in gloom, and we were forced to

EMERGING IN THE GREAT OPEN PIAZZA BEFORE THE DOORS OF ST. PETER'S

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tear ourselves away. "I don't want to see anything more to-night," Sheila whispered. "I just want to dream and dream of what I've seen. I couldn't bear to look at another thing after *that:* I can hardly realise it all yet, and that I shan't wake up. It's all too wonderful to be true. Rome, really Rome!"

"Yes, really Rome," smiled Ken, who with Dorothy had remained quiet up till now in the tonneau, thinking, as he informed us at dinner, what a conscientious courier I should have made.

"Too conscientious by far," Dorothy added laughing, "for Ken and I were mere ciphers in the tonneau, and I verily believe that Roy had forgotten our existence entirely."

"I really believe I had," I admitted, "but can you blame me? Would Ken have been any better in my place?"

Leaving the Coliseum, now almost lost in the darkness, a few short cuts brought us into the broad Corso and to our hotel.

For one short glorious month we lived in Rome. What we did and what we saw cannot be chronicled here. Rome is too big and mighty, too great and wonderful for my humble pen. We just breathed and let the grandeur of it all sink into our souls. How I revelled in piloting Sheila through the eternal wonders of this Eternal City, in diving with her into the mysteries of the past, in wandering together through the ruins of the Forum, or climbing the slopes of the Palatine. Ah! those days in Rome, flying past so quickly and leaving behind

them one vast blurred memory, never to be forgotten or effaced, of crumbling ruins, of consecrated buildings, of old pagan temples, their pillars torn from their grasp to support the roofs of Christian churches; of great ceremonials, of simple ones, of vast structures and of glorious tombs, of narrow almost forgotten graves lost in the darkness of the catacombs—all are blended together in our minds, and there held sacred.

THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, THE RUINED FORUM

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CHAPTER XI

A FLYING GLIMPSE OF ITALY

ONE day we drove to Villa Adriana, leaving Rome by the Porta San Lorenzo. The dust lay thickly upon the road and the wind behind us carried it in clouds, enveloping us till we were slaty-grey in colour, and we coughed and sneezed to try and rid ourselves of its irritating presence.

At Hadrian's Villa the fates blessed us with an acquisition in the shape of a gentleman carrying a large umbrella and calling himself "Ze Ingerlich Guide." He met us at the entrance, and presented his testimonials by pointing out the gold letters on his cap. We were in no need of a guide, but he appeared so heart-broken at being told so that Sheila and Dorothy insisted on his accompanying us. He was an Italian—a character. He had, so he informed us, taught himself English, French, and German, and was justly proud of the fact; so proud was he of his accomplishments that he steadfastly refused to utter a word in his native tongue, but favoured us with his English in a long, loud, unvaried and unceasing flow, like a rush of water from a burst pipe. He really did know the Villa well,

every stone and monument, and continued to impart his knowledge like a gramophone. He was most bitter against the Pope, who, he declared, "'ad tuk al' ze statue, ze fresco, which was not him broke by ze soldat, to ze Vatican an' lef' thiss place one ruin bare." We were so amused with this quaint personage that, to his delight, we engaged him for the day, and invited him to visit Tivoli *à la Mercédès.* When he fully grasped the meaning of the proposal we escaped with difficulty from his torrent of thanks, and left him to waste their sweetness upon the surrounding air.

From Villa Adriana to Tivoli the road rises gently from the country of oranges and figs up the slopes of the Sabine Hills, amidst dense groves of olives, till it is some 700 feet above the flat Campagna.

I need not enlarge upon the glories of Tivoli—

> "From the green steeps where Anio leaps
> In floods of snow-white foam,"

and whose beauties are seen to such advantage from the Belvedere where our trusty, if voluble, guide conducted us. Likewise how, after lunch, he led us through the lovely gardens of the Villa d'Este, or piloted us with pride into the Temples of the Sibyl and Tiburtus, and pointed out, far away on the horizon, the crowned dome of St. Peter's. It was with tears in his eyes and something more substantial in his pockets that, late in the afternoon, he sorrowfully and with expressions more heartfelt than intelligible bid us good-bye. And our last impressions of him were seeing him standing in the middle

"THAT'S THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE," SHEILA CRIED

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of the road, with his hat in one hand and his large umbrella waved violently by the other.

Our intention had been to drive through Naples into Calabria and ship Mercédès to Sicily, but while staying in Rome there came the alarm that Vesuvius had broken out into open rebellion and was pouring ashes on to Naples. Friends who arrived in one of the crowded trains from the stricken city described the panic reigning there, and advised us not to venture into the town, crowded as it was with the panic-stricken peasants pouring in from the country and half distracted by the loss of their homes. Everyone was disappointed, especially Sheila, to whom I had been describing the charms of Naples, and the glories of Pompeii, Sorrento, and a host of other delightful places.

"I am afraid it won't be possible to get to Naples," I said. "Its narrow streets are no place for Mercédès when the town is under ashes and the crowds are at large. However, we will go as far south as possible, and if the accounts we hear are exaggerated, we'll go right into the city. If not, the road is always open to return."

Sheila clapped her hands, and Dorothy and Ken seconded the idea. The hotel prepared a lunch for us to take, as it was exceedingly doubtful if we could obtain one *en route*, and on a glorious morning we turned our faces to the South. The sun was already beginning to make his presence felt as we passed the Scala Santa, up whose wood-protected steps the kneeling pilgrims slowly progressed, and through the Porta San Giovanni Laterano we

passed between a proud church and a decaying ruin, which as Dickens says are "good emblems of Rome." We were now upon the flat Campagna travelling over the Appian Way towards the blue haze of the Alban hills. The remains of old temples, palaces and tombs, stand rotting mournfully upon the flat plain; the broken arches of the great Aqueduct of Claudius stretch far across the green desert, only adding to the already desolate appearance of the scene. Reaching the hills the road ascends gradually up to Albano, whence we looked back upon Rome rising like an island from out a dreary sea of lead. Through Velletri we descended back to the Campagna where the road crosses the Pontine Marshes. How lonely and dreary is this sodden waste, covered in many places with brushwood. Here and there a house, its doors and windows thickly covered with wire gauze, or blackened hovels like haystacks at the roadside, where live the people of the land during winter till summer comes with its racking malaria and dreaded mosquitoes, to drive them and their cattle high up on to the hills. A river flows sluggishly beside the road. Sometimes a man comes toiling along its banks dragging a flat-bottomed boat, or peasants drive their herds of wild buffalo into the water to wallow: for here they breed the buffalo, big fierce-looking animals who glared at us with their wicked little eyes. Once we came upon a herd lying upon the road; there was a clear space among them through which we passed like a flash, and before the animals had time to plunge to their feet we

THE TEMPLE OF VESTA

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were a dust cloud upon the horizon. Now and then an eagle sweeps majestically over the marshes, till, startled by our noise, it turns quickly away. Cowboys, with lassoes, hairy trousers, coloured shirts and broad felt hats come trotting along looking as though they had stepped out of Buffalo Bill's Show, their hardy little ponies objecting strongly to Mercédès and generally treating us to a gratis exhibition of buck-jumping ere they vanish in a gallop. The road over these marshes is well made and lined by tall trees, stretching for nearly forty kilometres without a hill or a turn to relieve the monotony. The heat, when great, rises in deadly mists from the swampy ground and the sight of the sea at Terracina is thrice welcome, as is the pure breeze blowing inland from the blue expanse. Passing the Inn made famous by Washington Irving's tales of the Italian Banditti, we left the town and also the cool ocean, crossing the old Neapolitan frontier and passing through Fonda. There seems little changed here since Dickens passed through on his way to Naples; now, as then, "there is not a door, a window, or a shutter; not a roof, a wall, a post, or a pillar, in all Fondi, but is decayed, and crazy, and rotting away. The wretched history of the town, with all its sieges and pillages by Barbarossa and the rest, might have been acted last year. How the gaunt dogs that sneak about the miserable streets come to be alive, and undevoured by the people, is one of the enigmas of the world." All is unaltered, save that those men and women shuffling from one dark doorway

to another were squalling children playing in the gutters when he drove through some sixty-five years ago: and in another sixty-five years it will be the same Fonda exactly; the same, save that the men, women and beggars whom we see now, will have ceased to exist, and the children in the gutters will have taken their place. Out from the narrow streets into the fresh air, and we are flying up a glorious mountain pass on whose summit stands the ruined fort of Fra Diavolo, and as the road commences the descent we come upon Itri, a cluster of houses perched perilously against the side of a steep hill. A beautiful sweeping descent and we reach the sparkling sea.

Looking towards Naples both sky and sea were enveloped in inky darkness as though a giant storm was brewing. "I hardly think we ought to go much further," I said, pointing to the darkness ahead.

"Couldn't we stay at some little town, and go on to-morrow?" Sheila suggested; "we're near to Gaeta, aren't we?"

"We are in Gaeta bay," broke in Ken, who had been studying the map, "and there's Gaeta itself," he added.

On our right the land stretched far out into the cool blue waters, forming a promontory some three miles in length. On its extremity lay Gaeta, a piled up jumble of white houses glistening in the sunshine.

"Let's stop there," Sheila exclaimed, "it looks so cool and inviting—don't you think so, Dorothy?"

AN INTERIOR
ROME

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"I do," responded Dorothy. "I was rather afraid that we were going into that fearful darkness. It will be delightful."

The sun was sinking over the hills behind us as we followed the road round the edge of the lapping waters, passing through several small but very busy villages crowded with people, whose sole occupation seemed to be fishing, and who accorded us a noisy welcome. Though Gaeta is renowned in history, its accommodation for unexpected visitors is miserably deficient; at least that was our experience. The town is beautifully situated with quaint harbours and cobbled streets, but the hotel was dirty and the food bad, and spoilt our short stay in that celebrated little seaport. We left early next morning, returning over the same road round the beautiful bay. Towards Naples the whole sky was as black as ink, and a few miles further would bring us into the rain of ashes, so reluctantly we were forced to postpone our visit to Naples and Sicily, and retrace our steps to Rome. At Gaeta we had, to our dismay, found it impossible to obtain any petrol, and the outlook of having to make some 300 kilometres on the little we carried was anything but pleasant. Unfortunately we were off the track of the railway, which keeps inland after leaving Rome, but we hoped for better luck at Terracina. At Terracina we tried to obtain a few gallons of the precious fluid but without success, the people to whom we applied appearing to regard our failure as particularly amusing. And with prayers in our hearts we quitted the sea, entering the dreary waste of swamp. At Velletri,

only thirty-six kilometres before reaching Rome, we were lucky enough to find a chemist who supplied benzina in jug-fulls and charged its weight in gold. Between Albano and Rome we encountered hundreds of wine-carts, their drivers fast asleep in the cosy arm chairs from which they drive, (save the mark !) the animals, poor, miserable, half-starved, and totally wretched beasts, wandering aimlessly along the centre of the road.

The dinner that night was to us a feast for the gods; save for the contents of the luncheon and tea-baskets, we had tasted nothing eatable since leaving Rome, and our appetites on our return to the hotel were well worthy of the dinner that we ordered.

We did not linger in Rome, but set out northwards, leaving the flat Campagna, climbing up into the Apennines, and following the footsteps of Garibaldi in his sad but brilliant retreat from Rome; every mile of the road seems to breathe his history. The oxen no longer are white, but of a slaty grey, also the people are more industrious, tilling the fields and working with a surprising energy compared with their brothers of the South. The road passes through many villages and towns, old and war beaten, telling tales of battles, sieges, and by-gone glories. Perhaps the most interesting is Todi, which,

> "Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
> Of purple Apennine."

It is a city set upon a pinnacle hanging over the twisting Tiber, a city older, so it is declared, than Rome. Etruscan originally, it has fought its way

THE BROKEN ARCHES OF THE GREAT AQUEDUCT OF CLAUDIUS STRETCH FAR ACROSS THE CAMPAGNA

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through the stormy middle ages up to the present day, and in spite of the centuries of war remains in a state of wonderful preservation, its massive walls retaining their mediæval appearance, rivalling almost the old Cité of Carcassonnne. In its narrow streets, too steep for wheeled traffic, one almost fancies that one hears Garibaldi and Hugh Forbes with their red-shirted escort clattering over the cobbled ground.

The light was failing when we reached the foot of the hill upon which stands Perugia, strongly fortified, 700 feet above, and from her elevated position gains an extensive view over the land she once ruled. A short climb ending in a massive gateway admits us within her ancient walls. Our stay in Perugia, the Queen of Umbria's cities, was all too brief. The town alone would occupy much time, if one were to endeavour to visit all its glories: steeped in history, in victories and defeats, sieges and rebellions, coupled with the names of emperors, popes, warriors, statesmen, and great painters, Perugia is a place where one would be content to spend a month.

The road to Florence passes the still waters of the Lake of Trasimeno, sacred to the memory of St. Francis, and at Arezzo, a town of many churches, cuts through the line of Garibaldi's retreat, and enters Tuscany. Following the twisty Arno we lost our way, and at a cross-road took the wrong direction, following a narrow and extremely mountainous road, crossing a range of hills, and finally descending a steep descent to Florence. Florence la bella glit-

tered gaily in the sunshine; the Ponte Vecchio looked as imposing and quaint as ever, and the beautiful slender tower of the Palazzo Vecchio brought back recollections of previous visits to this city of the arts beneath the spurs of the Apennines. A few days we rested, spending them in wandering through its galleries and renewing our acquaintance with many beloved pictures.

Bologna stands in the path to Venice, forming a convenient run from Florence. Of the three roads that lead there we chose the central one, *viâ* Prato and Sasso, as the scenery is very beautiful. The road follows the railway till it reaches Prato in Toscana, from the pulpit of whose cathedral is exhibited on favoured occasions "the girdle of the Virgin." The road now turns into the Apennines and ascends the Valley of the Bisenzio, passing through many little villages to whose hospitality Garibaldi owed his escape from the Austrian tyrants. Reaching Mercatale, the road crosses a narrow gorge and commences to rise rapidly. Half-way up the ascent we encountered a storm, and for a time were entirely enveloped in the clouds. Soon, however, the sun forced himself through the heavy mists and shone with renewed brilliancy. Beneath us we could see the remains of the storm sullenly retreating down the valley before the attack of the good fairies of summer. La Serra is the summit, some 2500 feet above Florence, and from here the road commences a long and easy descent. Some distance further and we could see, far, far away, upon the point of a steep hill, the church of the

PEASANTS DRIVE THEIR HERDS OF WILD BUFFALO INTO THE WATERS TO WALLOW
THE PONTINE MARSHES

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Campo Santo of Bologna. In the town itself the streets are sheltered on either hand by arched colonnades, a defence against snow and a sufficient reminder that we were now in the coldest city of Italy. Bologna has many special sights to visit. Her massive cathedral, her two handsome piazzas, especially the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, in which Ugo Bassi and Gavazzi preached the doctrine of liberty, sowing the seed of future greatness in the minds of the people. Garibaldi's name starts up at every turn, even clinging to us at night in the famous Hotel Brun. Also Bologna boasts the possession of two leaning towers; unlike the one at Pisa, these campaniles are ugly in the extreme, being square and built of brick. One, only 160 feet high, is ten feet out of the perpendicular and closed as unsafe; the other rises beside it—320 feet—like an immense square chimney, and is four feet out. The interior is pitch dark, and the ascent is made by frail wooden ladders laid against projecting stones. The authorities make it compulsory to take a guide, and though we climbed it, we were exceeding glad to regain *terra firma* in safety. The two campaniles lean in opposite directions, and give, when seen for the first time, a rather curious effect.

The journey from Bologna to Venice is superb; the roads are magnificent, straight, broad, and with an excellent surface. Still beneath the shadow of the Apennines we could distinguish before us a faint jagged outline above the horizon; as we drew nearer the outline became more defined and coloured

deeper and deeper till it was rich purple below and white above, and we were gazing at the great chain of the Alps. For some distance the road runs along the top of a high bank beside the broad waters of the Po, and then crosses the river by a fine bridge of boats. At Padua we spent an hour in the massive cathedral "Il Santo," as the people call it, and paid a flying visit to Dante's house. After Padua the country becomes more barren and the road traverses a plain of marshes; ere it turns to the left we caught a glimpse of a great cluster of domes and pinnacles, Venice rising majestically out of the sparkling lagoons. Shelley, "'Mid the Mountains Euganean," writes:

> "Underneath day's azure eyes
> Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, . . .
> Column, tower, and dome, and spire
> Shine like obelisks of fire."

There is no need of a notice warning automobilists to proceed no further—nature herself has put the most formidable barrier between the Car and the Bride of the Adriatic. She lays a commanding finger upon Mestre and says, "Thus far and no further shalt thou go." And there Mercédès stayed, with Dennis as guardian to watch over her with jealous eye, whilst we, forsaking our comfortable car, were forced to humble our pride and take the train across the short stretch of lagoon.

Save for Sheila, Venice was an old friend of ours, and to her, seeing it for the first time, it was a fairy-land of wonder. Never before had I enjoyed Venice

CROSSING THE PO BY A FINE BRIDGE OF BOATS

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as on that visit; from one glorious monument to another we slowly progressed, gliding over the still waters to the sound of the lap-lapping of the water against the gondola and the musical cry of the gondolier, as we sped swiftly through narrow canals or rounded the sharpest of corners, enchanted by the meeting and avoiding of other gondolas and the panorama of marble palaces. And when we tired of marble palaces and priceless works of artwe would seek rest at the Lido, watching the great breakers rolling in from the open Adriatic and beating upon the long sandy beach, that beach on which Shelley and Byron used to ride. In the evenings we would glide out upon the lagoon between S. Georgio Maggiore and the Molo, its broad surface illuminated by the soft moonbeams, the air filled by the voices of singers in gondolas hung round with fairy lanterns. To each gondola of musicians were in attendance scores of other gondolas, a dark dense mass clinging round a little centre of light. Sometimes the gondolas would flit silently from one group to another, dark forms gliding like shadows over the glistening water, spirits of the night. On shore the exquisite Palace of the Doges shone out in the silvery light as though carved in ivory, while the entrance to the Grand Canal lay deep in shadow.

We were in another world—a world of dreams, of memories, and of rest. Had it not been for the following reason, I verily believe that we should not have had the power to tear ourselves away.—

Our failure to visit Naples and reach Sicily had been a great disappointment, especially to Sheila,

and the fact troubled me exceedingly; so much so that I set about cudgelling my brains for another surprise to make up for the loss. During my travels I had never visited Spain by car, and the dazzling idea came to me of attempting to drive right through to Gibraltar. The more I thought of it the more I longed to make the attempt, until the desire became irresistible. Of course I had heard awful accounts of the Spanish roads, especially south of Madrid, in Andalucia and Murcia, where, it is generally understood amongst motorists, the roads are chiefly conspicuous by their absence and bridges unknown. As far as the capital the way was quite possible, but of the south only a lamentable ignorance seemed to prevail. That fact I knew would be my strongest argument when I told Ken, for his sporting instinct would urge him involuntarily to clear up once and for all the doubts and mysteries surrounding it. I began my campaign diplomatically by presenting Sheila and Dorothy with Hutton's "Cities of Spain," "The Moors in Spain," Washington Irving's "Tales of the Alhambra," and even Locart's "Spanish Ballads," in fact every book of interest that I could lay my hands on. This was the thin end of the wedge. Next, was to speak, more in sorrow than in anger, of the short distance we had been able to journey in a southern direction, scarcely further south than Valladolid, and not so far as Madrid, hardly (here, I emphasised the "hardly") half across Spain. Then when their minds were steeped in the Iberian Peninsula I lit the fuse and exploded the proposal of a tour to

"IL SANTO," THE MASSIVE CATHEDRAL OF PADUA

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Gibraltar *à la Mercédès*. From Venice, I pointed out, we would travel through North Italy and South France, passing over the cream of motor-land ere we reached the Land of the Dons. I will not weary you with my arguments, save to say that I succeeded far beyond my expectations in winning three fervent converts. Naples, Capri and Sicily were forgotten, and we set out from Venice eager for the new sensations and adventures in store for us.

Our cry was Westward ho! as Mercédès bore us from Venice, pinnacles and spires fading upon the horizon till only a dim mist remained far over the marshes, and we commenced our journey from the hot Adriatic to the open Atlantic. "Many-domed Padua proud" was our first stepping-stone, and we caught but a momentary flash of its Cathedral and Piazza, sleeping in the sunlight: the road now lay over beautiful fertile country, through fields of maize, mulberry trees, and countless vine-yards, white oxen and long wine-carts. On our right the great mass of the Euganean Hills, dear to Shelley, rise up in towering forms, and to our left, nearly beyond the reach of eye stretches,

> "The line
> Of the olive-sandalled Apennine."

Near Verona the mighty Brenner breaks through the Alps bringing with it the freshness of Tirol and a memory of our Alpine tour. Verona, upon the banks of the swift Adige, is full of interest from its Amphitheatre to its busy Piazza covered with

innumerable fruit stalls, each under its brilliant red umbrella making the square look like a nursery of blushing mushrooms. The tombs of the Scaligers, the tomb of Juliet, San Zeno, and the Giardino Giusti, all call for time—time—time. Instead of a month, we stayed three days, leaving much for a next visit. Desenzano lies upon the blue waters of Lago di Garda, but here the lake has lost its grandeur, and its surroundings are flat and vine-covered, with here and there lemon-groves buried in their midst.

Brescia "the Valiant" we passed through without halting, its streets crowded with soldiers, its very breath breathing militarism, showing how this strongly fortified vassal of Venice has never forgotten the part she played in history, or her brilliant defence and terrible fate of 1849. Still beneath the spurs of the Alps the road reaches Bergamo. There are two towns of Bergamo, the new and the old. In the new we stayed at a quiet little Albergo, thoroughly Italian, where the standard food is macaroni, a most tasty and delightful dish to our unaccustomed palates. La Città Alta, the old town, set upon a hill, is worthy of a visit, containing several jewels of art. We walked back to the hotel by the old ramparts overlooking the plains of Lombardy.

From Bergamo we travelled to Lecco, and until Como were on familiar ground. A glimpse of the lake at Como and we turned south making straight for Milan over exceedingly bad roads. The people working in the fields on either side of the road

FROM ONE GLORIOUS MONUMENT TO ANOTHER

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appeared to be knee-deep in the ground, and when we halted to replace a burst tyre, we had the pleasure of a closer inspection. As we were fitting a new cover many gathered round us, and a motley group they were. Their legs, bare to the knee, were covered with a shiny deposit of mud. Both men and women worked on an even scale that would have satisfied the most rabid suffragist. From what I could gather from them, the whole ground is flooded some two feet deep and allowed to drain; in six weeks or so a crop of maize or corn springs up, is cut, collected, and the ground sown afresh and reflooded. As many as eight to ten fresh crops are grown each year. Naturally the roads are sodden, also they are deep in ruts made by the narrow wheels of the huge carts that continuously crawl over them. The busy traffic of Milan was more than welcome after the uninteresting waste, and doubly so for its exquisite cathedral and other choice monuments.

Unfortunately the Mont Cenis lay deep in snow, offering an effectual barrier to our westward passage. I should have liked to re-travel its splendid road, and from Modane pass *viâ* Grenoble and the old monastery of Chartreuse to Avignon, a beautiful drive in summer, but now impossible. As we could not go over we naturally must go round, *viâ* the Riviera. Our day's run from Milan was to Genoa, over the dreary plains of Lombardy and Piedmont, through Pavia and Tartara. Leaving at last the weary plains and entering Liguria, we finished the day

with a beautifully hilly descent to the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

From Genoa we followed the coast and of course retraced our former journey. A road wears quite a different aspect when traversed in an opposite direction to the previous journey; objects and views that have been hidden by some projecting rock or tree are now revealed, and one marvels how they could have flitted by unseen. The road round the Gulf of Genoa is ever fresh; its quick bends open out, for a few moments, ideal views of sea and rock; another turn and they are hidden or their memory lost in the contemplation of others even more beautiful. The sun upon the Riviera was already becoming unbearable and the dust lay thick upon the roads, and save for the beautiful coast we were glad when we had crossed the Esterel and could breathe in comfort.

Italy now lay behind us, a memory, and our minds were free to speculate upon our journey through Spain. As we progressed through France we were treading in the footsteps of the Romans; town after town recalled their passage by its decayed monuments, Arles, Nîmes, Narbonne, Carcassonne, Toulouse, and a host of others. Between Salon and Arles there is a stretch of road singularly favourable to high speed; but we were unable to let Mercédès exert anything like her full power as a gale of wind was blowing at the time: the long line of trees at the roadside bent and creaked as the wind tore through their groaning branches, and we expected each moment to see the

TO THE SOUND OF THE LAP-LAPPING OF THE WATER AGAINST THE GONDOLA

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weaker trees uprooted and dashed across the road. Arles was struggling in the grip of the wind-fiend, the tiles from the housetops flew like leaves, coming down edgeways into the street in a manner hardly comforting to the nerves. We, unfortunately, became jammed in a narrow street, the houses on either side within easy reach of our hands, and the tiles and pieces of housetops dropped around us in dangerous proximity. We made shift to get from under the overhanging roofs, but in the narrowest place met a party of men carrying the limp body of an old man who had been struck upon the head by a heavy tile, and was a ghastly object. They carried him into a chemist's shop that luckily was handy, and we made the best of our way to an hotel, the wind howling and shrieking round the corners and the people dodging from one doorway to another. Next morning the storm had considerably abated and after breakfast we set out. We quitted the main road in order to pay a passing visit to Tarascon where still the Baobab stands before the home of Tartarin, and the village remains exactly as it was when Daudet's hero paced the streets, ready, aye ready, for "they" who never came.

Henceforward the weather was magnificent, the sun for ever shining and the air clear as crystal. The roads were excellent; day after day passed, each similar to its neighbour, and restful in its monotony. That glimpse of France was very welcome, coming as a pleasant change between our journeys through Italy and Spain, delivering us into

the enchanting arms of the goddess Speed, and for one glorious week we took full advantage of her gifts.

Of all the towns lying in our path,—Arles with its ruined Amphitheatre and ancient St. Trophimus, Nîmes with its still finer Amphitheatre and Maison Carrée, Montpellier, Béziers, and Toulouse—the old Cité of Carcassonne, with its turrets and battlements, calls for special attention, forming as it does a perfect example of the fortifications of the Middle Ages, and giving the startling impression when seen from a distance that one has leapt back a thousand years, so perfect is its preservation.

At Toulouse we reached the first of the great battlefields of the Peninsula, or rather the last, the field on which Soult suffered his final defeat at the hands of Wellington and hurriedly retreated to Carcassonne. From Toulouse till we reached Almarez, upon the Tagus, we passed through a land that whispered Wellington at every turn; were I to relate the battles and sieges connected with the towns and places we visited I would only be repeating backwards the history of the Pensinular War, and I must remember that no matter how interesting it is, it has no connection whatever with an automobile tour through Spain.

At Tarbes we were under the spurs of the Pyrenées and heading straight for them on a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Lourdes leaves a deep impression on the mind—the tiny grotto with its myriad of flaming candles, its crowds of devout worshippers, and its

THE MUSICAL CRY OF THE GONDOLIER

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halo of crutches; the Church of the Rosary perched upon a rock seeming to stretch out two long bent arms as though to gather in its flock; the Mont Calvary with its motionless figures, often standing deep in snow; and above all the great silent nunneries, almost lost upon the surrounding mountains and shunning all intercourse with the living world.

CHAPTER XII

IN THE LAND OF THE DONS

Two excursions we made with Mercédès into the heart of the Pyrenees to Cauterets and Gavarnie, two short and beautiful drives; the road ever rising climbs amidst the hills through fine scenery. Both places were out of season, closed and bordering on the snow-line. From Lourdes we travelled to Pau, ever in view of the snow heights, and from there again headed for the hills, determined this time to pass through their midst and not to be turned back, as before, almost at the border. The little village of St. Jean Pied de Port lies at the gates of Spain, at the foot of the Roncesvalles Pass, and here we spent our last night in France. A stroke of unexpected good fortune was thrown to us by Fate. The patron of the little hotel we stayed at, offered, for a paltry 30 francs, a free pass into Spain. In the ordinary course of events we should have had to deposit at the frontier some 2000 francs. With the remembrance of Italy and our still unreturned 600 francs in our minds, we literally jumped at his offer, and with a promptness that visibly astonished mine host possessed ourselves of the permit.

THE EXQUISITE PALACE OF THE DOGES SHONE OUT AS THOUGH CARVED IN IVORY

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Armed with the usual *passavant* we quitted France early next morning, and crossing the tumbling waters of a stream, entered Spain. Only a small hut guards the Spanish end of the bridge, the principal *douane* lying some distance from the frontier. A soldier mounted Mercédès, and we climbed quickly up the dreary Val Carlos, where so many lives have paid the penalty of their owners' convictions. At the custom house our permit acted like a charm, and after a lenient examination of the luggage we were allowed to proceed. Smiling upon the polite officials we left the little *douane* and began our climb over the Roncesvalles Pass. This pass cannot compare with the beauties of the Stelvio or the wildness of the Gotthard, or any of the other lovely passes of the Alps. It is chiefly interesting from its close connection with the history of Europe. We were indeed following in the footsteps of innumerable armies from the time that Rome sent her legions to explore what lay beyond the great range of mountains, and to add another world to her already glorious empire; through all the intervening centuries have these silent hills looked down upon a continuous stream of warriors. It is here—

> "Where Roland brave and Oliver
> And every paladin and peer
> On Roncesvalles died,"

where the mighty Charlemagne coming to rid Spain of the Moors, found his passage disputed by Christians and infidels fighting hand in hand under the romantic Bernardo di Carpio of warlike memory.

As one climbs the narrow road, winding up the side of a sombre hill, one can picture the scenes that have been enacted here; of England's first invasion into Spain, when Edward the Black Prince led the chivalry of England and Bordeaux upon the unworthy object of setting a tyrant upon his dishonoured throne. Again, five centuries later, when the same hereditary enemies, France and England, fought fiercely for possession of the summit. In almost recent times the Royalists and Carlists shed each other's blood in this melancholy valley.

The road was good but rather stony, and in places almost too narrow to allow Mercédès to pass the heavy mule waggons we continually met. As it neared the summit we came upon large patches of melting snow, on whose slippery surface the unprotected wheels failed to grip, and Mercédès skidded perilously near the sloping edge of the road, which here overhung the valley a thousand feet beneath. From the summit, some 3500 feet above sea-level, the descent is gradual and the road often strewn with stones, and it was afternoon when we sighted the historic battlements of Pamplona. A cold and wintry city is this northern capital with its fine cathedral, war-battered walls and great *plaza*. In the *plaza* its people promenade, no matter the weather, the aristocrats in heavy, dark cloaks lined with red or green plush, the other *caballeros*, those less favoured by fortune, wrapped in large grey blankets, yet each wearing the flat hat of the Basques, to which race they are proud of belonging. Innumerable dogs — great gaunt animals — run

"WHERE ROLAND BRAVE AND OLIVER, AND EVERY PALADIN AND PEER, ON RONCESVALLES DIED"

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hungrily from place to place ravenously devouring aught eatable that lies in the gutters, or rummaging the refuse heaps piled high at the roadside, the while filling the air with their discordant barkings and continuous squabbles amongst themselves for any tit-bit that the pack has discovered. We spent the next morning visiting the cathedral and ancient walls, and in the afternoon watched a match of Pelota, the national game of the Basques.

The following day we quitted the old capital of Navarre; the temperature was very low and a biting wind blew across the snows of the Pyrenees. Crossing the Aragon, and still travelling beneath the shadow of the hills, we came to Vitoria, a town chiefly interesting from its connection with great events near the battlefield of Najera. As we continued our way the weather became colder and colder, and rain commenced to fall in torrents. We were now in Castilla la Vieja and the road entered the fine gorge of Pancorbo. Here the sun burst through the clouds, illuminating the scene, and for a time the rain ceased. Great black rocks towered high on either hand, and between them raced the foaming Oroncillo: the rocky passage opened out, and we caught our first glimpse of the vast plains of Castilla. Nearly 3000 feet above the sea, they stretch as far as the eye can reach unbroken by trees, hedges or boundaries, and silent as the grave; save for the long teams of mules there is scarcely a living thing to be seen. To complete the picture of desolation the sun disappeared and a blinding storm of snow enveloped us, completely shutting out the

barren landscape. Huge flakes beat in upon us under the canopy, and we were white before we could pull down the waterproof curtains. When this operation was accomplished we might have been in the interior of a submarine, so closely did they fit, giving us welcome protection from the storm that swept around the car covering the glass screen with snow, and beating against the curtains till they bent inwards threatening every moment to rend in two. As we faced the storm we encountered several mule waggons toiling slowly along the deserted road: the drivers, enveloped in their blankets, looked like ghosts as they appeared for a second out of the storm, only to vanish next moment like smoke. Here and there, behind a mound or raised bank, a few wretched peasants cowered under their grey blankets vainly seeking shelter. The country round Burgos is particularly barren, and here the storm raged fiercely, the snow coming in blinding sheets against the obscured glass, and the curtains bending inwards to their utmost. In the streets we obtained some protection against the full force of the gale, though the snow was thickly falling, causing us some difficulty in locating an hotel, for the streets were deserted and pedestrians few and far between. When we eventually reached the hotel we keenly appreciated the bright fire and excellent dinner after the biting cold outside. Next day the weather was good, cold but fine.

Too short was our stay in Burgos, too short to thoroughly visit its many monuments, but long enough to gather a lasting memory of the glorious

A LASTING MEMORY OF ITS BEAUTIFUL AMBULATORY
BURGOS CATHEDRAL

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cathedral with its beautiful ambulatory, its exquisite chapels and quiet cloisters; of the tomb of the Cid: the "Myo Cid el Campeador," of his old chronicler. Many objects in Burgos are closely connected with this national hero, a hero of both Moors and Christians by the way. From the cathedral we climbed to the ruined Castillo, upon the summit of a bare grassy hill above Burgos and commanding an extensive view over its bleak surroundings. In these old walls were the Campeador and Ximena married—

"Within his hall at Burgos the king prepares the feast,"

and two hundred years later, the place resounded with similar rejoicings when Edward of England and Eleanor of Castile were joined together. Many a fierce struggle have the broken walls and ruined towers taken part in, even defying Wellington under their French defenders, and baffling all his skill to capture them. In the barren valleys are several monasteries, including the famous Real Monasterio de las Huelgas.

We should have wished to prolong our visit, but for the thought of the journey before us. Passing beneath the beautiful Puerta Santa Maria we left Burgos; the road is good but crosses a landscape unutterably barren, whose only redeeming feature is its ever-changing colour. Great bleak hills, instead of relieving the monotony only seem to add to it; villages, the colour of which made them indistinguishable from the surrounding ground, appeared and disappeared like magic. As the light

is reflected by the different parts so are the shades varied; sometimes the foreground is green, and in the distance the ground is copper, from which rise great purple hills, and behind them a sky of gold; a moment later and all has changed, and another combination chosen by Nature's ever skilful hand is delighting the eye. Above all broods a strange stillness over these Uplands of Spain where history is for ever forcing itself upon the mind.

At Valladolid we rested for a day: Its Plaza Mayor now hums with busy life and bears the unenviable reputation of having listened to the shrieks of the heretics burned there in the first *auto da fé*, and setting an example that the rest of Spain were only too quick to follow. From Italy—the scenes of St. Francis, the gentlest of mortals—we had passed to this of his friend S. Dominic, the originator of the terrible Acts of Faith. If two places quarrel as to possession of the house where Columbus was born, Valladolid can safely claim to possess the one and only in which he died, for as far as I know there is no other disputant to the honour.

Quitting the town next day our road still travelled over the interminable *veldt* towards the Sierra de Guadarrama: Nature's barrier between Old and New Castile. We left the main road about thirty miles after leaving Valladolid and headed for Segovia. Evening was deepening into night when we sighted its stately Alcazar perched upon a pinnacle of rock, on three sides hanging over the dark swirling waters 300 feet below. Passing through an old stone arch-

ITS EXQUISITE CHAPELS
BURGOS CATHEDRAL

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way we commenced to rise up the steep hill towards the town, and, as we climbed, the long line of the massive Roman aqueduct burst majestically into view. Mounting higher we entered into a network of narrow streets emerging at last in an open *plaza* before the doors of its solemn cathedral.

We slept that night in a little hotel cunningly hidden in a narrow street, its comforts equalled only by the hearty reception that we received. Segovia, with her aqueduct as proof, can claim to have been in a state of civilisation when her sister cities were but bending to the conqueror's rule. From the Sierra de Fuenfria it carries the clear water to the city, a distance of over ten miles. Unlike the Aqueduct of Claudius, whose broken arches we had passed on the Roman Campagna, it is undamaged, and still performs its health-giving office. In crossing the town it has to traverse a deep valley, and forms here one of the most wonderful and graceful of monuments: for 300 yards it stretches, built in 119 arches, in places 95 feet above the ground: of shaped blocks of granite, innocent of clamps or mortar, the enormous mass is only supported by its absolutely faultless design. In the Middle Ages its origin was popularly supposed to be the work of the Devil himself, by a superstitious people unable to realise the heights of civilisation to which their Roman conquerors had risen and from which they had fallen many centuries before.

The cathedral is massive and fine, but the Alcazar is, of all the mediæval buildings of Segovia, the

finest; it rears itself proudly upon an extremity of rock where two sides of Segovia meet, high above the valley, and form a narrow point jutting far out into space. On three sides its walls are built upon the very edge of the sheer rock. From this eminence one gazes far over the surrounding country, undulating in great waves, red and burning in the light of the dying sun, and dotted here and there with ancient buildings and crumbling churches. The sunset was particularly rich, seen, as we saw it, from the walls of the Alcazar, giving the desolate surroundings the appearance of fire, as though the ruddy ground was heated by an invisible furnace.

From Segovia our way led across barren moors and misty hills, climbing slowly till it reached the summit of the Guadarrama Pass. A lion carved in stone was erected here in commemoration of the completion of the road by Ferdinand VI., four hundred odd years ago, and there it still crouches, 5000 feet above the sea, gazing tranquilly upon the immense plains of New Castile, 2500 feet beneath, a perfect sea of land, an unending ocean without a ship to relieve its boundless horizon. In the centre of this solitude lies Madrid, the youngest of the capitals of Spain, her white palaces rising on a hillside like an oasis in a desert. An easy road leads downwards from the summit and passes through the little village of Guadarrama bringing us to the plains. Leaving the great mass of the Escorial on our right, we hurried on towards Madrid and too soon were lost in its busy traffic. Madrid is too

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BURGOS CATHEDRAL

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modern both in style and taste and seems almost out of place in Spain; she has no crumbling ruins or ancient monuments, only her position above the interminable desert, gives her a certain dignity; but happy in her possession of the famous Prado Gallery, she can claim a position in Art equal almost to any other centre of Europe.

At Madrid we shod Mercédès with new tyres, and although we carried five spare outer-covers, we decided to increase the reserve to seven. Three were placed on the canopy, two were strapped to the driving side, and for the remaining two, we rigged up, with the help of wooden rods and cord, a kind of grating above the luggage at the back, and on to this we lashed the two tyres. Inner tubes we had in galore, about twenty being stowed in various places about the car. Also we made preparations for carrying six gallon-tins of petrol upon the tool-box, and six more in the tyre circle behind; thus having essence for 120 miles in addition to the twenty gallons in the tank. Oil was our next care. We had long tanks fixed in convenient places, and altogether were able to carry nearly twenty-five gallons. We laid in a supply of rope in case of emergencies. Add to this our ordinary touring kit of spares and tools, also a very heavy load of luggage (for we now carried everything with us) and our five selves, and you have the cargo with which Mercédès was fated to face the trials and uncertainties of South Spain.

From the city a bumpy road leads over the Toledo Bridge out into the desolate plains across which it

cuts, exposed to every storm that rages and to the burning rays of the sun which beat down with pitiless force. The road is good though often strewn with stones; mile after mile we flew along till we came in view of Toledo—the Rome of Spain—standing upon its rocky precipitous hill and cut off from the world by the hurrying waters of the Tagus. We were now in Don Quixote's land and his extraordinary adventures since he left his home in barren La Mancha, read trebly well surrounded by the land he describes and the facsimile of the folks he met. Toledo, Medina Almeyda, "The City of the Table," the oldest and most important of the cities of Castile, is specially fascinating. Tracing its foundation to Tabal, the grandson of Noah, it has been the home of every creed and people, the Jews, the Gentiles, and the heathen have at one time or another reigned here, each leaving ample traces of their passage. When one is traversing Spain from north to south it is at Toledo that one comes upon the first real traces of the Moors. Of the Goths, the founders of the city, few traces are left save the gateway and walls built by Wamba; with the rest of Spain it succumbed early in the seventh century to the Moors, betrayed, so the legend says, by the Jews, revolted in the ninth, was starved into submission by the energetic Abd-er-Rahman III., and until the tenth century remained in their hands. During those three centuries of Moorish rule it was enriched a thousandfold by that warlike and civilised nation, who increased its natural defences, added much to its fortifications, built many exquisite

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OLD CASTILE

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mosques, and under their enlightened rule it throve and prospered for 300 years till it was torn from their grasp by Alfonso VI. Even under the Christians and Jews, the followers of Allah continued to embellish the city and were treated by their Spanish conqueror with a kind of tolerance till the Inquisition came, with all its horrors, sweeping them from existence and, with a cloak of ignorance and superstitious tyranny, blotted out the spark of civilisation, science and learning that had been brought into Spain and there encouraged by a people whose characteristics were bravery and a rare tolerance for the worshippers of other creeds. Amidst these scenes and associations one could spend months wandering from mosques to synagogues, to Christian churches, and following the varied history of the city step by step from out obscurity up to the present time. Here it is that the horseshoe arch, the emblem of Moorish architecture, is met at every turn, while the narrow streets and strongly built houses, many almost windowless, bring back realistic thoughts of the stormy days of the Middle Ages or incidents from the "Arabian Nights." In the carved interior of San Juan de los Reyes hangs the very cross that was held before the eyes of the burning victims of the Inquisition, and upon the outside walls are hung many chains and manacles said to have been used by the Moors upon the Christians. How closely is the Cross connected with the Crescent in this dreamy old town surrounded on three sides by the Tagus hurrying onward towards Portugal. In Toledo are the first signs of picturesque-

ness in dress, and in its crowded *plazas* are many types, both quaint and amusing. The men wear perhaps the most striking clothes, for many have black jackets and knee-breeches ending in fancy leather leggings open at the ankle. Around their waists a band of scarlet cloth is wrapped in many folds, their foreheads bound with coloured handkerchiefs, and they wear stiff black hats with great round brims. Add to this a four days' beard and a dignified manner, and you have the *caballero* complete. Amongst the women is worn the mantilla, but not so generally as in Sevilla and sunny Andalucia.

From Toledo we commenced to follow the gradual retreat of the Moors as they fell back step by step before the Christians, their kingdom lessening and narrowing year after year, losing their treasured mosques and palaces one by one, yet fighting with undimmed ardour against fate, proving their creed that no man may escape his destiny, that his fate is writ large upon his forehead, and truly, so saith the prophet, it may not be avoided.

Up to now our journey had been nothing out of the ordinary; as large towns had always intervened at convenient distances, it naturally followed that we had been favoured with good hotels; we had travelled only over Northern Spain, over a cold black country, swept in winter and spring by frequent storms, and in summer burnt by intolerable heat. But from here we were leaving Northern Spain and our experimental journey commenced. As far as we could see the nearest town was Sevilla,

FORMS ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL AND GRACEFUL OF MONUMENTS
SEGOVIA AQUEDUCT

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some 300 miles south, and from the account of the roads that we gathered at Toledo we should be compelled to rest many times *en route* at some of the doubtful villages intervening. Still, we reflected, each man's destiny is written, saith the faith of Islam, and comforting ourselves with the creed of a vanished people we started into the unknown after lunch one afternoon, intending to stop at Talavera, some forty miles away.

The sky was overcast, dark clouds were gathering, distant thunder rumbled a warning, a few heavy drops of rain fell upon our sheltering canopy, and the glass screen was soon covered with mud. Immediately upon the heels of a brilliant flash of lightning came a deafening peal of thunder that seemed to shake the car, and with a hiss and a roar the storm burst. The road, bad enough when dry, grew sodden with the wet, and great masses of clay clung lovingly to our wheels. We seemed to be driving through a very inferno as the storm-king hurled his forces in our faces. The road resembled a ploughed field and the mud was terrible, flying against the glass-screen in great lumps, spreading out upon the glass, and being washed off in streaks by the torrents of rain dashed against it by the storm; lightning flashed continuously, and the thunder sounded almost directly above our heads. To stop us attempting to get through the storm as quickly as the road would permit, bang! went a back tyre and down sank the car on one side, the deflated wheel sticking like grim death in the bog of mud. For awhile the storm raged too violently for us to leave the shelter of the

protecting curtains, and we had, perforce, to sit in our seats and wait till it had passed. How it rained! "Torrents" hardly describes it, the popular phrase "bucketfuls" would be mild. Ahead of us the road stretched absolutely flat and almost entirely under water; the landscape was even bleaker, seen by the miserable light and illuminated by the flashes of lightning. Byron's lines referring to Wellington's victory over the French recur to the mind:

> "Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice
> Three tongues prefer strange orizons on high;
> Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies;
> The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!
> The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
> That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
> Are met—as if at home they could not die—
> To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
> And fertilize the field that each pretends to gain."

Slowly the storm passed, the rain ceased, and we descended to give the tyre our attention—and blessing. It was muddy work, and the road we stood on ankle deep in slush. A new cover was unstrapped, and fitted; but it was almost dark when we had finished, and we hailed the straggling houses of Talavera with delight. There was barely a soul in view as we splashed through the mud and reached the quiet streets; ere we had proceeded twenty yards we were surrounded by a quickly-growing crowd of men, women, and children, who poured in a never-ending stream from the doors of the houses. Cripples and ancients too infirm to walk were

AND THERE IT STILL CROUCHES, 5000 FEET ABOVE THE SEA, GAZING DOWN TRANQUILLY UPON THE IMMENSE PLAINS OF NEW CASTILE

SUMMIT OF THE GUADARRAMA PASS

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carried to the doorways by their loving relatives anxious that they should see us pass. Children hung upon the back of the car, and when we stopped for a moment to ask for an hotel, it was with difficulty that we were allowed room to proceed. Accompanied by this cheerful, chattering swarm we arrived with our ever-increasing escort at the tiny little *fonda*, the one and only in the town, where we were welcomed with open arms and bowed ceremoniously to our rooms. Mercédès was conducted to an outhouse, where the door was left unbolted, quite open to the street, and with all the pride of the Spanish race to guard her she remained untouched and unattended. Talavera is a quaint old town, and we were kept here for three days by the incessant rain. Though we appeared in the unbecoming *rôle* of curiosities, the people behaved in a way that set a shining example to the rest of Europe through which we had passed; there was no shouting, shoving, or bustling, no rude or ill-mannered remarks, whilst as for honesty, I verily believe they would have starved rather than touch an object that was ours. We found it a true saying that in Spain every man is a *caballero*, a gentleman, and knows how to behave as such. Our stay at the *fonda* was the event of the year. Rich and poor, young and old, came to gaze respectfully upon us. "Were we not related to the Royal House of England?" "Were not the lovely Señoritas sisters of the Queen?" or, "Of what country honoured we with our presence?"—such were the questions asked with bated breath. On entering the dining-room we

bowed gravely in answer to the dignified salutes of the company present; on rising to leave we went through the same ceremony. In fact, we were as good as a circus to the good people of Talavera—nay, better, for there was no charge for admittance.

TOLEDO, THE OLDEST AND MOST IMPORTANT OF THE CITIES OF CASTILE

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CHAPTER XIII

THE DESIRE OF OUR HEARTS

THE three days' continuous rain had not tended to improve the road; from Talavera it became, if possible, worse, and our wheels sank deep into the sodden ground. At Navalmoral de la Mata we left the main road to Portugal, and crossing a massive stone bridge high over the Tagus, now a roaring torrent, we began to traverse a noble mountain pass. Trujillo, our destination for the night, nestles upon the crest of a barren hill, from which it seems to gaze sleepily upon its bare surroundings as though unconscious of its fame as the birthplace of the conqueror of Peru. For ten miles on either side of Trujillo the road is excellent, hard, well made, and kept in a state of perfection. And the things we said about those in authority who maintained the road would, had they heard them, have made them blush. Also, all too soon the good road crosses a dreary marsh and degenerates into a sandy track covered deep with countless stones and reducing us to a walking pace. The things we said about the keepers of *that* road would have made *them* blush for a very different reason. Although the ground was sodden beyond

belief, and we had often to use our first gear upon the level, we were glad that the weather was not dry and hot, for we knew that from the rank growth upon the swamp around must rise vapours more deadly than off the Campagna of Rome. Sometimes a great vulture would sweep high above our heads, and now and again the silence would be broken by the shrill cry of a hidden bird. The swamp was covered by a rank growth of brushwood and presented a scene of the most desolate loneliness. The sodden, sandy road continued till we dragged ourselves on to higher ground and reached the Roman city of Merida. Full of interest is Merida; here, like Toledo, have the Goths, Romans, Moors, and Christians, trampled upon each other's heels and wrestled fiercely for mastery. From its grand old Roman bridge which, in sixty-four arches, crosses the Guadiana, we wandered to its triumphal arch, a single row of stones balanced perilously in the air, to its ruined aqueduct and theatre, but the call of Andalucia was irresistible and urged us southward.

As we were returning to the hotel for dinner we were treated by the Fates to an amusing sight. Since Talavera we had noticed that the Spanish pigs—great, heavy animals—seemed to possess an acute vein of reasoning. For instance, at Trujillo a herd was returning sedately and alone to their homes when it began to rain; immediately the whole herd commenced to run as hard as it knew how. However, it was only a slight shower, and a moment later stopped; with one accord the herd slackened speed and resumed its stately walk. The careful

THE HORSESHOE ARCH IS MET AT EVERY TURN
SANTA MARIA LA BLANCA, TOLEDO

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student of porcine life in Spain will doubtless have observed that at a certain hour every morning each pig leaves its home and seeks a fixed rendezvous, and becoming a herd, marches *en masse* to the grazing ground. Likewise every evening the herd returns, dissolves, and separately each pig seeks its home. The example which came under our notice at Merida concerned two pigs that had left the herd and were walking sedately down a narrow street a few feet in front of us. About halfway, pig-on-the-left turned to pig-on-the-right, nodded, and without hurry, left its companion and mounted up some steps, entering the tidy front door of a small cottage. Pig-on-the-right took no notice, but continued his way down the street some fifteen houses further, then quietly, and without ostentation, entered the abode by the front door. There was no snorting or grunting, and we were sorry not to be able to catch what pig-on-the-left said to his companion as they parted, though one could easily guess the words: "Ah! my digs, I see. Sorry I can't ask you in; we swill at 8 sharp. See you in the morning! So long, old man!" We still smile over the recollection.

Now came our longest journey in Spain, 120 miles across an unknown district. The same distance in France would be the merest child's-play, but after our sample of Spanish roads it seemed a big undertaking. We left early next morning prepared for a similar road to the marshy swamp; however, the road was much better than we expected, and we made good progress, still crossing the dreary plains

towards a blue haze of mountains beyond which we knew Andalucia must lie.

It was midday when we left the plains and crossed over a series of lofty hills; descending at last from the high cold plateau of Spain to sea-level, entering Andalucia to be greeted by the first palms and introduced into a garden of loveliness. The road, alas! was horribly bumpy and deep in dust, Mercédès plunging along, now down on one side, now down upon the other, and her heavily-laden canopy swinging in dangerous jerks. Suddenly in the distance we caught our first glimpse of Sevilla, and were rewarded for the awful road, its white houses dominated by the superb Giralda, wrested from the Moors. Sevilla was revelling in the first day of its famous *Feria*, and we met the long procession of carriages conveying the gaily-dressed crowd to La Corrida de Toros. Amongst the glories of motoring in South Spain is the delightful uncertainty as to where or in what manner one will spend the coming night—a state of things which makes it utterly impossible to forward luggage or order rooms in advance. We arrived in a veritable whirlpool of gaiety and hurry, and drove to an hotel feeling like shipwrecked sailors washed upon the crowded shores of a fashionable watering-place. We were lucky enough to obtain rooms at the Paris, facing a palm-shaded square, and were glad to settle down to a few days of rest and eatable food before proceeding upon our journey.

The Feria of Sevilla is too well known to be described here, and the city is of course at its

A SANDY TRACK, COVERED DEEP WITH COUNTLESS STONES, CROSSES A DREARY MARSH
SOUTHERN SPAIN

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brightest. Curiously enough, neither Sheila, Dorothy nor Ken had ever crossed Spain before, and naturally had up to now a very poor idea of the climate. In Sevilla we dropped into summer and felt the heat and incessant sunshine a very pleasant change after the weeks of bad, cold weather we had suffered. Holy Week had passed, and the city was at its gayest, every one of course in gala dress, the white mantilla seen to perfection, as were the gaily-coloured shawls worn by their owners with no little pride. The broad Prado de San Sebastian was one long blaze of colour; the unending procession of carriages with their gaily-dressed occupants being intermingled with the horse-breeders from the country. Dressed in grey, short Eton jackets and flat, stiff broad-brimmed hats, they canter in and out of the traffic on fine spirited horses, and control them in a way that even won Ken's critical admiration. Once or twice we had met these horsemen as we approached Sevilla, and each time there ensued a battle royal between them and their horses. Scorning to dismount or to ride away from the road upon the soft grass, they forced their horses, time after time, right up to Mercédès' bonnet till the frantic animals reared high in the air, refusing to pass. Undaunted, the riders applied whip and spur, sitting in the strange, high-backed saddle with wonderful ease as their animals bucked and reared. Not one man we met turned back or shirked our approach, but with a courage in keeping with their hard, set faces, they fought and conquered their horses, and despite their

energetic remonstrances, triumphantly forced them past.

Often we were glad to leave the continuous line of carriages and glaring sunshine to wander in the exquisite courts of the Alcazar, the Moorish palace now restored to its original colours and beautiful beyond belief, and with a garden of graceful palms. Or in the cool interior of the vast cathedral, where once we were lucky enough to witness a full service, the organ resounding through the stately old pile with magnificent effect. Altogether we spent a delightful time in beautiful Sevilla.

Sevilla was but a pleasant memory behind us as we sped southward through a region of beauty. Tall, stately palm-trees reared their graceful branches into the rich blue sky; orange and lemon trees grew in profusion; great cactus and aloe plants lined the road, forming an impenetrable hedge from ten to fifteen feet high. Everything was so different from the bleak, barren desert through which we had hitherto driven. The road, although good, was broken here and there by cleverly hidden gutters, often dangerous, especially when Mercédès was taking advantage of a stretch of road free from stones. Presently the road crosses an immense heath where the grassy ground undulates in great billows, and where are grazed the herds of bulls doomed to the arena. At one place upon the endless prairie we came upon a novel sight—a flock of vultures feeding upon the carcase of a sheep. Now and then the great birds would fly up and, soaring in the air for a few moments, swoop back to

A GARDEN OF GRACEFUL PALMS
SEVILLE, ALCAZAR

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LA CORRIDA DE TOROS
SEVILLE

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their gruesome meal. Like the jackals of India these great birds act the useful office of scavengers, quickly removing all traces of anything eatable that falls into their clutches. Leaving the undulating waste, the road passes through groves of oranges, pomegranates and olives, reaching Jerez, a town of white houses and palm-shaded squares. Step by step we had been following the decline of the Moorish kingdom, and at Jerez reached one of the several towns that formed the boundaries of that disappearing kingdom in its last days of existence—

"When rages the hot battle before the gates of Xeres."

Xeres de la Frontera, as it was called, was the scene of many a fierce fight, ere, in the middle of the twelfth century, it yielded itself for the last time to the overpowering Christians, and the Moors rallied together to hold their dear Granada with its Alhambra and beautiful Vega.

Next day we were early upon the road, passing through the vineyards that supply the golden sherry to the world. Already we could smell the salt breezes, and presently we caught a glimpse of the sparkling sea. A gale of wind was blowing from the east, and as our road followed the coast we faced the furious blast that whistled shrilly past our ears. The white walls and flat-roofed houses of Cadiz, a Moorish-looking town, stand upon the extremity of a spit of land some ten miles out into the Atlantic:

"Fair Cadiz rising o'er the dark blue sea."

To reach the beginning of this narrow isthmus, the road crosses the great salt marshes, where the sea water is evaporated and where the salt thus collected is formed into enormous pyramids that stand up white and bare upon a surface flat as the ocean itself. Passing through some decayed fortifications, we reached the little fishing village of San Fernando, and began to traverse the narrow neck of land towards a city founded by the Phœnicians a thousand years before Christ. Soon the sea was lapping the road on either side, that on the left beating up in great white rollers from the open Atlantic; the other a natural harbour where many ships lay peacefully in the calm waters. When the east wind blows it carries with it quantities of sand, piling it high upon the road. Unfortunately the gale was tearing in the same direction as ourselves, and continuously enveloped us in a blinding, stinging cloud of sand. Now and then we ran into patches of sand banked against the low wall by the hurricane of east wind, and here our wheels sank deep into this loose surface, until the bottom of the car rested upon the ground, taking all her 70 h.p. to drag us along. At moments it was a question whether or not she would stick, and for a second Mercédès seemed to hesitate, then with a supreme effort tore herself from the loose mass and regained firmer ground. At these moments we held our breath, and breathed a sigh of relief when she conquered. Every joint exposed to the sand became almost solid, and the engine, under the bonnet, was completely hidden beneath a coating

PASSING THROUGH SOME DECAYED FORTIFICATIONS
NEAR CADIZ

of this gritty substance fine as powdered emery. Here and there the road was full of deep hollows and bad holes, the dangers of which were hidden by the shifting sand.

At last we reached Cadiz and found ourselves in an old-world town, with narrow streets and palm-strewn squares. Tall Moorish houses stand silently erect, their lower windows heavily barred; and now and then we caught glimpses of their *patois*, veritable arbours of palm and orange trees. Through Cadiz the old, whose streets are proud of their absence of wheeled noises, we passed, disturbing the sleepy quietness by the hum of our car. Cadiz is essentially a town of the East, and is full of charm: her position, jutting far out into the open Atlantic, is doubly welcome after the tedious journey across the Peninsula. In Cadiz everything is white, from her cobble-strewn streets to the flat-roofed houses; even their interiors—at any rate those that we were permitted to see—are laid with pure, glazed marble. The sea, beating against her walls on three sides, brings with it cool salt breezes that not only temper the heated air, but keep the town fresh and clean, freeing it from many of the impurities that otherwise it would gather from the flat marshes around. One of the greatest charms of Cadiz is her beautiful Parque Genovés, where palms of every kind grow in the utmost profusion, and on the ground beneath the spring flowers form a varied carpet of the utmost brilliancy. Of the cathedral, gazing out to sea, I need not speak save to say that it was worthy of Cadiz.

The sun was dying far out in the sparkling sea as we walked slowly along the deserted ramparts and fell a-thinking of the great days when Drake, Raleigh and Essex harried the Spanish coast and plundered the rich galleons in the fair harbour of Cadiz. How anxiously must the keepers of those treasure-ships have gazed at the dim horizon, hoping against hope that the white specks had vanished and the blockade was over, or that their own fleet had come to rid them of the constant terror in which they lived.

The Venice of Spain behind us, we passed again across the sandy isthmus, to our relief, facing the gale of wind. After San Fernando we left our road of the previous day. Over a turbulent stream, its waters held in check by the hurricane, we crossed by means of a plank bridge of boats, which creaked and groaned as Mercédès crawled over its heavy surface. The road still crossed the salt marshes, cutting between the white pyramids. Cape Trafalgar, a misty outline on our right, brought back thoughts of that noble victory, purchased at so dear a cost. Striking inland, we hummed along in the teeth of the gale; the road was fairly good, although at one place we came upon two stretches of heavy metal—the loose stones piled nigh a foot in height, and extending for more than a kilometre. Into these we sank, the bottom of the car scraping over them with a heartbreaking grind. We were crossing the battlefield upon which was fought the decisive encounter between Roderick, King of the Christian Goths, and Tarik the Moor, with his

TOWARDS A CITY FOUNDED BY THE PHŒNICIANS A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE CHRIST
CADIZ

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seven thousand followers, on his march from Gibraltar, that battle which, for nearly eight centuries, delivered Spain to Moorish rule; making her, during that period, a shining example of chivalry and civilisation to the rest of Europe. Upon the sweet pasture lands around we often saw large herds of horses grazing peacefully by the roadside, but disturbed by our appearance, the beautiful creatures galloped quickly away.

At last we struck the coast and sighted the Mediterranean. The sea we had left that morning had been of a grey colour, covered with white crests; the sea we saw now was of the deepest blue, a match to the cloudless sky above. We had passed through the Straits and were upon the most southern point of land in Europe, Cape Tarifa: that spot on which had landed twelve hundred years before, Tarik the Moor, with only five hundred men to sample the land which he was fated to conquer. And from him, the Cape takes its name, Tarifa. Again, leaving the coast we began to rise some 1400 feet upon a military road, the finest and best kept in Spain, winding high through the cork forests until, on reaching the summit, we were treated to a view more beautiful even than the first glimpse of Naples. We were looking down upon the Pillars of Hercules; far below rose the famous Rock, whose massive form towered sheer out of the sea. Joining it to Spain, stretched a short flat strand of neutral territory. The mountains of Africa seemed almost joined to those of Europe, while the Straits that divided them appeared like a tiny stream Over

the whole was flung the purple shade of evening, the setting sun, like a ball of fire behind us, casting its lingering light upon the mountain top as though loth to take its glories from the scene beneath.

We were brought to earth by the explosion of a back tyre, which, after heroic sufferings, had looked upon Gibraltar—and died. It was almost dark when we drove through the gates of the Reina Cristina Hotel at Algeciras, the other back tyre flattening itself with a report that brought the porters running to the door. Little we cared for these paltry worries, for we had accomplished the desire of our hearts and reached the goal of our tour.

At Algeciras the road ends, and to reach Gibraltar by land, one must walk or ride along the mule track which alone leads to *la linea*. Algeciras is delightfully situated in the centre of a beautiful bay, at the extremity of which rises the Rock. Between the two ply steam ferry-boats, which in half an hour convey the traveller across the dancing water. The hotel we found, to our joy, was under British management, and was, without exception, the most comfortable and delightful place we had been lucky enough to find during our wanderings, not only in Spain, but in many other countries.

Our stay here is amongst the most pleasant recollections of the tour. The weather ever since we had entered Andalucia had been magnificent, and here the heat was saved from oppressiveness by the close proximity of the cool waters and the many shaded palms. Our bedroom windows looked across

THROUGH CADIZ THE OLD, WHOSE STREETS ARE PROUD OF THEIR ABSENCE OF WHEELED TRAFFIC

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the bay to where the Rock rises out of a blue expanse, seeming, the more one looked at it the "Lion couchant," it has been so often likened to, or at times resembling a sphinx. As Gautier says: "Un Sphinx de granit énorme, démesuré, gigantesque—la tête, un peu tronquée, est tournée vers l'Afrique, qu'elle semble regarder avec une attention rêveuse et profonde." Almost every day we crossed the bay to spend a few hours on British soil and under a flag, where, thank Heaven, there flourishes at every corner a warning against cruelty to animals. After our long journey, passed, as was most of the time, in places where nothing but Spanish is spoken or understood, the sound of our native tongue on every hand and in every dialect was both curious and welcome. The "Galleries" were a source of great interest to Sheila and Dorothy, who had never visited Gibraltar before and they delighted to climb, under escort, from one hidden gallery to another, and wonder at the countless guns which look towards Spain and guard the narrow frontier below, with its row of English and Spanish sentries. Sometimes we would climb to the signal station, some 1200 feet above the blue waters, and looking down upon the old town, dream over the events of the great Siege, while watching the ships pass through the Straits, or with the aid of the guard's telescope, pick out the surf boats in the harbour of Tangier. The purple mountains of Morocco, barely seven miles away, seem nearer than Spain, and between them lies the narrow door of the Mediterranean, commanded by the great guns upon the summit.

Little wonder this speck of land is for ever a thorn in the side of Europe.

Returning each evening to Algeciras, and following the example set by the occupants of that town, we smuggled as much tobacco and as many cigars and cigarettes as could be unostentatiously carried upon our persons. Never were we even challenged by the custom officers upon the tiny pier, but passing through the gate, turned to watch the strict search made upon the unfortunate natives and peasants. First the officials looked into their hats, then commanded them to stand upright and with arms raised above the head, they subjected them to a minute examination; feeling the shoulders for undue padding, the arms, body, and finally the legs, discovering many little innocent-looking packages in unexpected places. No punishment is inflicted save confiscation of the contraband; this is thrown into a wooden packing case, which, after each steamer has landed its passengers, becomes filled to the brim with a miscellaneous collection. Often when the peasant has been despoiled of many packages and is looking very glum, the officials give him back two or three and he goes on his way contented. The rest is put aside to be consumed by the vigilant watchers of the tiny *douane*. Tobacco is free of duty in Gibraltar, but in Spain no duty will admit it; thus does that country endeavour to force its awful mixture into the pipes of its unfortunate smokers.

WHERE PALMS OF EVERY KIND GROW IN THE UTMOST PROFUSION
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CHAPTER XIV

THE PALACE OF A VANISHED PEOPLE

If we had failed in our southern tour in Italy, we had more than compensated for it by the present one, and reached a point further South than the most southern land of Sicily; in fact, parallel with Malta, beyond the motor-zone. And we were now to prepare for a journey from beneath the shadow of Africa to Albion's misty shores. From Gibraltar I had intended returning to France by following the coast, *viâ* Malaga, Valencia, and Barcelona. Although our journey here had been over the most abominable of roads we have ever been unfortunate enough to traverse, stony and often deep in sand, yet, praise be to the high gods, we had always found good bridges across the rivers and fair accommodation in the little villages. Therefore the journey was by no means impracticable, only rough in the extreme. Our first real intimation as to the state of the country in which we were, was the pleasing information that from here no road existed save the one by which we had come. Between us and the Sierra Nevada intervened the cork forests of Andalucia, crossed only by mule tracks, and covering a

range of lofty hills, which, not so long ago, had been the recognised home of brigands and smugglers. These, the famous "Guardia Civil" had hunted down and shot without compunction. As in the rest of Spain that excellent corps held absolute sway and kept a constant patrol over the whole area. As for the reputed road along the coast to Malaga which in Madrid we had been told of, it simply did not exist, and where it was supposed to be we found only a marshy, sandy waste, impossible for anything with wheels. There was only one thing to do, and that was to train Mercédès to Loja, a little village some thirty miles this side of Granada, where our only map showed that a road existed. I made all arrangements at the station, and at half-past six one morning we bade farewell to the Rock, then standing out majestically from a sea of steel. Through Ronda the ancient, and, it is whispered, the present home of smugglers, we passed, and it was four in the afternoon when the train steamed into Loja. The station lies a few miles from the Moorish village of that name, which nestles upon a swelling hill on the opposite side of the valley upon the banks of the Xenil, the white cluster of houses lit by the afternoon sun. Another reminder of the crumbling kingdom of the Moors, when that little white-housed town under the intrepid Ali Altar repulsed the cavaliers of Ferdinand and eight years later succumbed under Boabdil el Chico before the vigorous attack of Lord Scales and his English archers, fighting in the front rank of the Christians as they closed their deadly grip upon doomed

THE CATHEDRAL GAZING OUT TO SEA
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Granada, one of the seeds of the pomegranate that Ferdinand was so assiduously picking. By the time we had unloaded Mercédès, another hour had slipped away, and as we skimmed over the road the first shades of night were falling. The road, though sometimes full of *carniveaux*, was fair, and we made good progress. About half-way, as near as we could judge, we inquired of a woman the distance to Granada; with a smile she replied that we need only travel seven kilometres further. Rejoiced, but incredulous, we politely thanked her and drove on. "Surely we're not doing forty miles an hour," I said, "or else the map's quite wrong."

"I'm rather glad we're so near Granada, for that hotel at Loja gave me the horrors. We must have done nearly those seven kilometres," Ken announced, "though I'm hanged if I can see any signs of Granada, let alone the Alhambra." Nor were we fated to do so that evening, for a thing happened which raised our opinion of the woman, who had so cheerfully given the seven kilometres information, and decided that she had the bump of humour largely developed and was a wit of the first water; oh! simple, simple peasants! About seven kilometres, as near as we could judge, on rounding a bend we came upon the beginning of a fine old stone bridge. I say we came upon the 'beginning,' for the rest of that fine old stone bridge was lost in the immensity of space, and the broken end of the road hung crumbling some ten feet above a tumbling river. To the right of the road, a sandy track formed by clearing away the trees, led to the

water's edge. Down this we carefully crawled and to our amazement found that no bridge existed, or any means of crossing save by fording. Doubtless in summer the river would be shallow enough to ford, but at this time of the year, the melting snows had swollen its racing waters far too deep for us to attempt it, being in the middle well over five feet in depth. Two peasants, picturesque figures, emerged from the wood and sympathised with us, gravely shaking their heads at the swirling water. We were in a gorgeous dilemma; it was absolutely impossible to go forward, the idea of obtaining mules and towing Mercédès through the stream, we sitting on the canopy to keep dry, was out of the question; likewise we could not stay there all night, and lastly, what! oh, what sort of an hotel was that at Loja? While we were airing our different views on the best possible course to take, Sheila hit upon the only practical one, and proposed that perhaps if we hurried back to Loja we might catch a train and so reach Granada after all. Backing the car up the steep sandy track on to the road, we raced at top speed back along the way we had come. For the woman with the delightful sense of humour we strained our eyes, but were not favoured with a second interview. Through the little village we sped, down into the valley across the Xenil, and like a rocket, up the hill towards the railway station. One of the dark-faced porters, who had helped to unload Mercédès, was standing on the platform as I jumped from the car, and to my eager question, he slowly answered: "It left ten minutes ago, Señor." "Was

THE PURPLE MOUNTAINS OF MOROCCO SEEM NEARER THAN SPAIN
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there another?" "Si, Señor, at seven the following morning." "But not to-night?" I inquired. "No, Señor, as to-day is Sunday," he courteously answered. Would fate never cease to punish us for Sunday journeying? I reflected. "Should you desire to leave in the morning by the train at seven," the porter continued, "the automobile must be here at six to be loaded on the truck." "Now," I announced, as I returned to Mercédès, "nothing remains except the unknown hotel in the village." In the dark our unexpected appearance caused a tremendous sensation: familiar as we were, by this time, to large crowds, our reception at Loja was on even a grander scale than usual, and in the midst of a perfect multitude of people we found the one and only *fonda* where we were welcomed like long-lost relatives, treated to snails and garlic for dinner and afterwards conducted, with ceremony, to our rooms, whose bare floors and attentive mosquitoes, we remember vividly to this day.

A crowd even collected to watch us depart at five next morning. Loading Mercédès upon her truck of the previous day we reached Granada three hours later, and unshipping the car, drove up the steep road to the Hotel Washington Irving, upon the shady Alhambra hill.

Throughout Andalucia every object speaks eloquently of its connection with the Moors; the people's dark faces and flashing eyes still bear unmistakable signs of that noble race. Granada, surrounded by its beautiful Vega, enriched a thousandfold by the labour and science of the Moors,

was the last remnant of the kingdom left to the Moors. As long as the Alhambra remained to them hope was never abandoned, but when their palace fell and their kings fled, despair filled their hearts, and the broken remnant of a nation of heroes fled back to Africa or remained to be exterminated by the Holy Office. Wandering through the exquisite courts of the Alhambra it is hard to realise how vanished and almost forgotten is that once victorious race, though one is surrounded on every hand by tales and legends of treasure buried deep beneath the ground, guarded by armies of the true faith, held there by magic till the enchantments be dissolved, when a Moorish king shall reign in the palace of his ancestors and the children of the Prophet be restored to their own. The longer one stays amidst the marble palaces, rests beneath the palms of the fountained courts, or gazes from the beautiful terrace of the Generalife at the pure snows of the Sierra Nevada, the longer one is tempted to remain, and one loses count of the days that all too quickly pass.

Of the Alhambra Palace I will not speak—its glories are too sacred to be torn from their solitude by my rough hand and described here. It is so apart from the world, so full of romance, so indescribably beautiful, that palace of a dead nation. Reading the description written by Henry Swinburne a hundred and fifty years ago, or the enchanting works of Washington Irving, one may gather some idea of their charm; but neither writings nor pictures can ever bring to the mind a true conception of the

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magnificence and beauty to which this palace, the pride of the Moors, has attained. No wonder "Ay de mi Alhama!" and "Woe to Granada, the hour of its desolation is at hand!" are cries that rose from the people of Granada, filled with the spirit of prophecy, when the Castle of Alhama fell into the Christians' hands, no wonder they regarded it as a judgment for Zahara and the first step towards the final loss of their kingdom. Late one afternoon we climbed up the cacti and aloe-covered hill to the ruins of San Miguel el Alto, from which is obtained a glorious view. Above Granada rises the Alhambra, standing majestic upon its commanding rock, beside it the Generalife in its exquisite gardens; beyond lies Granada's pride—her incomparable Vega, and above all towers the glittering line of snow. We had reached the last stronghold of the Moors; inch by inch, step by step, had we been following their lessening kingdom, and at Granada, arrived at the scene of the final tragedy. How the memory of that scene is conjured up—of the last meeting between Boabdil, so justly called Ey-Zogoiby, the Unlucky, with Ferdinand and Isabella, of his delivery of the keys of the Alhambra and his retreat, accompanied by Ayxa la Horra, his mother, Zorayma, his wife, and a small band of followers,—the memory of that supreme moment when, ere entering into the dark gorges of the Alpuxarras, he turned to take a farewell and look for the last time upon the glories he had lost. Little wonder he burst into tears on seeing the banner of St. James proudly waving in the place of the Crescent, for it was a

terrible day for him and all his race. Lockhart, in his translations of old Spanish ballads, tells of the flight from Granada. Sitting upon the old Moorish walls we turned our eyes towards the Alhambra, and filled by the thoughts of that irreparable loss, and looking through the eyes of Boabdil, listened the while Sheila read, in a low, sweet voice, the few verses describing so graphically the sad farewell. How vividly that scene comes back to me! The ruined walls, the perfect evening, the view of the Alhambra, the snow and the Vega, the intense stillness, broken only by Sheila's voice as she read:

There was crying in Granada when the sun was going down,
Some calling on the Trinity, some calling on Mahoun;
Here passed away the Koran, there in the Cross was borne,
And here was heard the Christian bell, and there the Moorish horn;

Te Deum Laudamus! was up the Alcala sung:
Down from the Alhambra's minarets were all the crescents flung;
The arms thereon of Aragon they with Castile's display;
One King comes in in triumph, one weeping goes away.

"Thus," cried the weeper, while his hands his old white beard did tear,
"Farewell, farewell, Granada! thou city without peer;
Woe, woe, thou pride of Heathendom, seven hundred years and more
Have gone since first the faithful thy royal sceptre bore."

"Thou wert the happy mother of a high renownèd race;
Within thee dwelt a haughty line that now go from their place;
Within thee fearless knights did dwell, who fought with mickle glee—
The enemies of proud Castile, the bane of Christientie.

THE ALHAMBRA PALACE

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"Here gallants held it little thing for ladies' sake to die,
Or for the Prophet's honour, and pride of Soldanry;
For here did valour flourish, and deeds of warlike might
Ennobled lordly palaces, in which was our delight.

"The gardens of thy Vega, its fields and blooming bowers—
Woe, woe! I see their beauty gone and scattered all their flowers.
No reverence can he claim,—the king that such a land hath lost,
On charger never can he ride, nor be heard among the host.
But in some dark and dismal place, where none his face may see,
There, weeping and lamenting, alone that king should be."

Thus spake Granada's king as he was riding to the sea,
About to cross Gibraltar's Strait, away to Barbary:
Thus he in heaviness of soul unto his queen did cry:
(He had stopped and ta'en her in his arms, for together they did fly.)
"Unhappy king! whose craven soul can brook," (she 'gan reply),
"To leave behind Granada,—who has not heart to die—
Now for the love I bore thy youth, thee gladly could I slay,
For what is life to leave when such a crown is cast away."

As Sheila's voice died away we remained motionless, gazing with hardly comprehending eyes upon the Alhambra, our minds far away with the lonely exile, its last king. One could almost envy the faith of those followers of the Prophet who come on pilgrimages to this shrine, and, looking upon their lost inheritance and fallen grandeur, bend the head and say: "Allah achbar"; "God is great—it is the will of Allah." And as though in a dream we slowly descended into the picturesque Albaicin.

Another afternoon we visited the Gitanos, the Gipsies, to have our fortunes told and many of our

ideals shattered. The Gipsies, some four hundred families, live in caves hollowed out of the rock upon the hillside beneath San Miguel. They exist rent free and gain, by basketmaking, etc., a precarious and questionable living. Directly we entered amongst their dwellings we were surrounded by a bevy of noisy, quarrelsome children, very dirty and very importunate, who, regarding us as lawful prey, swooped down upon us with an insistent chorus of begging. *Cinco céntimos para manjar. Diez céntimos, Señoritas, por la Madre de Dios.* Acquiescence, instead of ridding us of the nuisance, only increased their demands—and number. The whole hillside is covered deep in aloe and cacti plants growing in the wildest profusion to the exclusion of every thing else. Of course we were inveigled into one of the many caverns and treated to a gipsy dance. The interiors of the caves are rather quaint, in the one where the dance was thrust upon us there was barely room to stand upon the earthen floor without risk of knocking against the uneven rocky roof. In one corner a double bed stood, its upright ends touching the jagged ceiling, in another corner a stove was placed for cooking; round about, on wooden shelves, were the little brass ornaments and tiny wooden statues that the gipsies force upon the unwary stranger at outrageous prices. Of windows there were none, all the light being admitted by the narrow doorway through which we had entered. Several chairs that must have seen better days long ago were collected and placed for us, and several

SO INDESCRIBABLY BEAUTIFUL IS THAT PALACE OF A DEAD NATION

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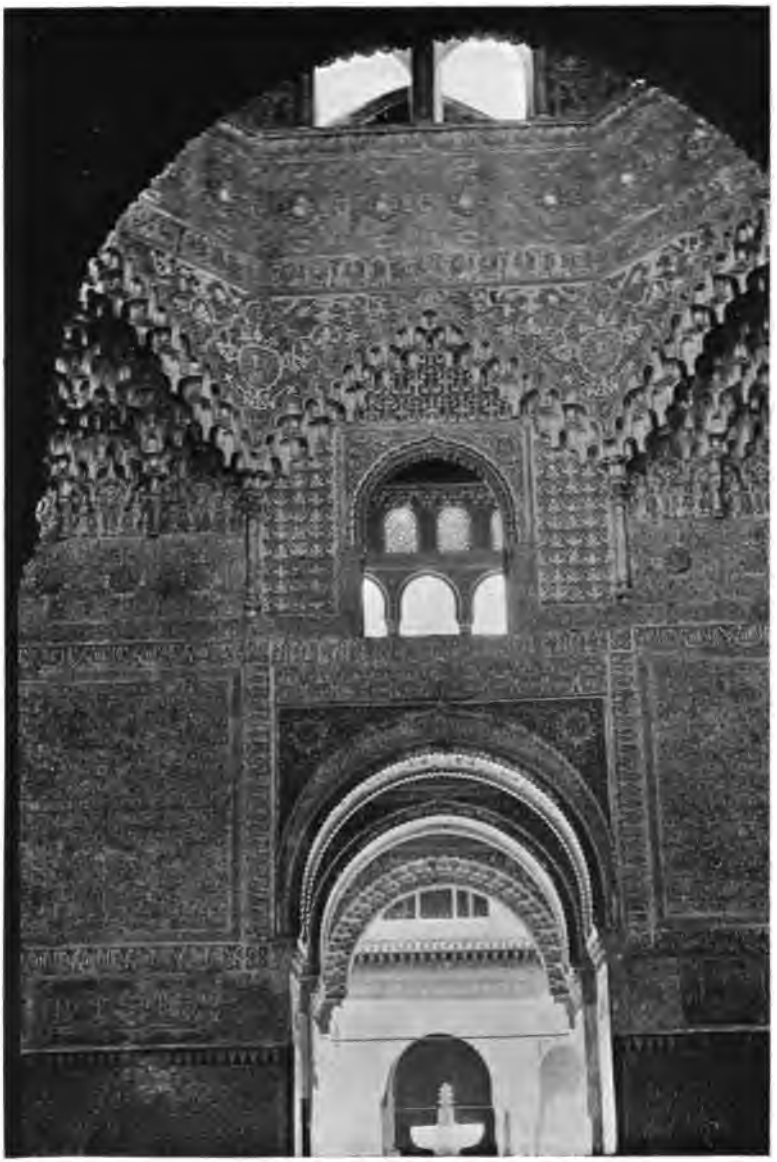
old, dark-skinned untidy women, and a few heavy, rough-looking men stood with their backs to the rocky wall between us and the door. The narrow doorway was soon filled by the bodies of our escort, their numbers swelled by a few men and women from neighbouring burrows. Four girls in gipsy costume performed the dance. At a signal from the old women in charge the company present struck up a wailing chant, clapping their hands at intervals. The dance, or series of dances, was mainly of a gliding nature, suggestive of a snake looking a scared rabbit in the eye. Sometimes the girls danced in unison, sometimes separately, but ever with the same interminable snaky glide; often with knees bent and one hand working above the head they would prowl round the cave like tiger cubs in a cage, all the while encouraged by the evil faces of the sun-blackened company. After the dance we were forced to listen to a vocal solo by an unshaved man of villainous countenance, in a very curious style of dress. Really it was the most weird and ludicrous performance possible to imagine. Seated upon a stool in the centre of the cave the man raised his swarthy face towards the roof, and from his tightly-drawn lips their issued a long-drawn wail, which rose and fell, and finally died a lingering death in silence. The next line was rendered by the whole strength of the audience, us excepted, then the gifted genius upon the stool again gave forth his dismal cry for all the world like a dog in agony. "If he does that again I shall burst out laughing," Dorothy whispered in

my ear. "For goodness' sake don't," I answered, for I could feel Ken shaking with suppressed merriment. To our relief the performance ended only just in time, for I declare I could not have kept a solemn face much longer. Next our fortunes were told by an old woman with great earrings and a horrible squint. Then came the important, the very important question according to the gipsies, of reward. The girls of the dance and their friends, the soloist and his friends, the fortune-teller and her friends, the owners of the cave and their friends, each in turn demanded money, even the crowd that blockaded the doors, strangled the light, polluted the atmosphere, raised the temperature, and generally made themselves objectionable, one and all, clamoured for money "por la musica," to which they had contributed. At last, after buying a heap of things we did not want, we escaped from their clutches and returned to the hotel very sure that one visit to the gipsies was all-sufficient.



THE MAGNIFICENCE AND BEAUTY OF THIS PALACE
THE ALHAMBRA

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CHAPTER XV

"THEY CALL THEM ROYAL ROADS"

How long we stayed in Granada I forget, we lost all count of the days while wandering in the realms of the past. But at last we decided to bid good-bye, or rather *au revoir*, and resume our northern journey through the "Land of Tadmir." It was nearly morning as Mercédès stood waiting at the hotel door. A smart-looking man in no particular uniform, but carrying a short heavy rifle, was strolling round her; he saluted when we appeared, and on asking the *concierge*, he told us that this was the night watchman and called him to us. "Is it loaded?" I asked, nodding to the gun. For answer the man threw open the breech and picked out a ball cartridge of heavy calibre: after I had examined it he replaced it, snapped the breech to, and resumed his stroll with finger on trigger. "Surely it is not necessary?" I asked. "One never knows," replied the *concierge*, shrugging his shoulders. A few minutes later we started, and waving our hands to the hotel staff at the door and the collection of gentlemen—at present—out of employment upon the other side of the road, we sped down the

Alhambra hill into Granada, and along the flat Vega. Ere we entered into the hills we turned in our seats for a last look at the Alhambra. Above towered the sparkling snows, high over the shining cupolas and domes of that immortal palace—that terrestrial paradise—for whose recovery the Moors, to this day, offer prayers to Allah every Friday. A second later the divine sight was hid from view and the Mecca of Spain lay behind us. The road to Jaén wound through the mountains over streams that once ran red with the mingled blood of Christians and Moslems. A thousand romances one could weave in these fastnesses, for many a dread tale of slaughter and pillage do they hold in their silent keeping.

As we were replacing a burst tyre two *guardia civile* halted to watch the unusual sight: leaning upon their rifles they gravely accepted a cigarette each and entered into conversation. The *guardia civil* of Spain is composed of a splendid body of picked men well fitted to their code of regulations, which sets "honour" as its main object. To them travellers owe their safety, ever ready to shoot on sight or risk their lives fearlessly, they have made brigandage a profession of the past. These courteous guardians of the road, dressed in black uniforms picked out with white and gold, and wearing Napoleon hats, are ever found in pairs: one an old experienced soldier, the other probably his pupil. Two travel by every train, and on every diligence, while others on foot and on horseback patrol the lonely mountain passes. Always with

THE GIPSIES LIVE IN CAVES HOLLOWED OUT OF THE ROCK, COVERED DEEP IN ALOE AND CACTI PLANTS

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their rifles in their hands, and willing to use them, they are, as one wag remarked, the civilisers of Spain. Well do they deserve that distinction as their history shows: many a cruel wrong have they punished, following a murderer and hunting him down in the mountain fastnesses. No false sense of mercy do they exercise, only justice in its strictest sense; under their rule crime dies a quick death, or its perpetrator dies a quicker.

A new tyre fitted, they quietly saluted as we drove away and resumed their lonely patrol. The old Moorish capital of Jaén retains little of its former greatness, save a few crumbling walls and ruined gateways. Its streets are precipitous and worthy of its character. The inn was crowded, so the polite, but distant, lady-proprietor informed us. Only one bedroom was vacant, and this, and a small boxroom next door she placed at our disposal, with all the ceremony of a princess laying a foundation-stone. The ladies naturally slept in state in the bedroom, Ken and I had a bed made up upon the matting on the floor next door. Where Dennis slept he alone knows, but even he could give a very vague description next morning. From Jaén we passed to Ubeda, a quiet village with a handsome little church in full view of the Sierra Nevada. Next morning we set out at six o'clock for the 125-mile run to Albacete. Never! oh, never! shall we forget that journey. For some distance the whole land was red, iron probably, and the dust that rose up in suffocating clouds, was exactly like cayenne, and with almost as fierce properties. The road

traversed an uninhabited plain far from civilisation, and from the railway. All day long we saw not a solitary *guardia civil.* Our way passed through no village of any size—only here and there a collection of huts of the poorest description. The road was terrible beyond belief; there was not half a mile that was not covered from six to eight inches deep with sharp, loose stones. With the wind directly behind us, the dust rose continuously in dense clouds, surrounding us and compelling us to stop the car, and shut our eyes, until it blew ahead, for it was impossible to see as far as the radiator. We made but poor progress, generally on the first speed; coupled with the wind behind, this compelled us perpetually to beg, borrow, or steal water with which to cool the engine. At one place the road ran along the bottom of a narrow gully, twisting this way and that and seeming endless. Even mending tyres was a relief from this tortuous crawl, a relief, by the way, that we were often treated to. The last twenty miles led across a plain, flat as the paper I write upon, and the road continued bad right into Albacete which we reached about seven in the evening. We wondered why the people stared at us so peculiarly as we dismounted from the car at the hotel door, but a glance in the glass showed that our faces, hands, and hair, were covered deep in dust, here and there red, elsewhere pure white: while our eyes where we had rubbed them were red and sore. Mercédès presented a sorrowful spectacle, the red and white dust lying inches deep upon and in every part of

A GIPSY DANCE
GRANADA

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her. As for the engine, the once spotless, shining joy of Dennis, it looked as though it had been rolled promiscuously about the awful road: whilst the tyres, two new at Granada, were literally upon their " uppers."

We had left Andalucia, and the fact was brought to our notice by the weather; it rained incessantly for two whole days—a rest much appreciated, though we shuddered to think of the effect upon the road. It was still drizzling when we left at six in the morning on a proposed journey of 130 miles to the nearest town, Valencia. Oh, that journey! the one from Ubeda, was play compared with it. Outside the town our troubles began. The road, the " Royal Road" as it was sarcastically called, never had a foundation; although in dry weather it would doubtless be quite firm, now it exactly resembled a ploughed field. Mercédès' wheels sank so deep into the quicksand surface, that when we stopped half a mile on the road, we found that the ground scraping against the bottom of the car had torn away the tail-lamp bracket, and nearly the whole of the luggage carrier. As the wheels at last refused to grip at all, we were compelled to put on the non-skids, while standing knee-deep in mud: by the time we were ten miles upon our journey it was striking nine. The road, to our surprise, actually became worse and worse (we hardly at first thought it possible), and we were reduced entirely to the first speed upon the level, for the wheels sank axle-deep in mud and loose stones. The wind behind us, once again compelled us to stop every few miles for water,

and where upon that desolate plain could we obtain water? Some we scraped out of the ditch, and bad and muddy though it was, we were compelled to put it into the radiator. Hour after hour Mercédès dragged her unwilling wheels through the clinging mud over the same interminable, monotonous, road across an undulating plain. Oh! the weariness of it all, a bare six miles an hour along a road stretching far out in front of us. Almanza, a little village only fifty miles from Albacete we reached about two-thirty in the afternoon. Unfortunately there was no inn fit to stay at, and we were compelled to go on. The streets were filled with a huge crowd of men, out on strike or some noisy *fête*, for we had some difficulty in passing, and only by patience and great restraint did we succeed in freeing ourselves of the mob. Forty more miles dragged themselves wearily beneath us, and on looking at the clock upon the dash we found that the time was after half-past six. Need I say we had been grovelling in the mud wrestling with tyres? As it would be impossible to travel over that road in the dark we could not do the other forty miles to Valencia, and consulted our one and only map, to find a place to stop at before darkness overtook us. Jativa, a tiny village upon the railway, some six miles from the main road, seemed the only place and there we decided to go, risking the accommodation. The road was somewhat drier and we made better progress. Our misfortunes did not end here; ten miles before we reached the branch road we came upon a mule tied to a doorway. Seeing us it became

LEANING UPON THEIR RIFLES THEY ENTERED INTO CONVERSATION
THE GUARDIA CIVIL

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terrified and broke loose; for a second it seemed to hesitate undecided whether to dash into the cottage or gallop along the road, then with a playful kick, it chose the latter and trotted along the road in front of us; keeping in the middle it would not hurry, or get out of the way, neither would it allow us to pass, but compelled us, with almost human anti-motorism, to follow at its own pace. Twice we stopped and tried to catch it, but each time it quickened its pace. Several peasants endeavoured to turn it on to the grass by the wayside, but with a supreme indifference to their presence, it continued its way, and the peasant was glad to escape unhurt on to the grass himself. For nearly six miles we followed that mule with darkness creeping quietly on. At last, when our stock of patience, sadly tried, was almost exhausted, the mule stopped and walked on to the grass: as we passed it turned round and looked at us, and if ever a mule grinned that one did, a nasty, derisive smile full of gratified triumph. It was almost dark when we left the main road and followed a tiny little path between high hedges, where, luckily, we met no carts—or mules. But had Fate finished buffeting us in the face? No: Fate was determined to show us what she could do when she liked. The road sloped down hill, down, down, till, to complete this day of days, we came upon a bridgeless river. Though broad, the water was not very deep, the main difficulty being the landing-place on the opposite side which rose almost perpendicularly. Breathing a silent prayer to Mercédès we drove her into the water, and reaching the opposite bank,

safely and thankfully climbed out. It was pitch dark when we reached Jativa, aud after some trouble found the hotel—and the crowd: into the hotel courtyard we drove, and leaving Mercédès beneath the leaves of a tall banana tree, we sought and found a well-earned night's repose.

On examining Mercédès next day we discovered that the new 935 × 135 tyre that had only run about forty miles was completely destroyed, the rubber hanging in pieces from its side, while the tread was bare canvas, cut and torn in a thousand places. The other back tyre, but a day old, was, if anything, even in a worse condition, and the front tyres were in rags; from this can be gathered some idea of the roads. The wheels had sunk so deep into the ground that the stones had ripped the aluminium shield beneath the car almost to pieces, while the petrol tank, protected though it was with heavy wire netting, was dented and bruised in half a dozen places. Not a spring, gear, tooth, or vital part of the car was damaged, which is almost beyond belief, after the rough usage to which every part had been exposed.

Unfortunately, at Ubeda, Ken had received news which made it imperative that he should be in England in two weeks from then. He had very generously offered to leave us and proceed alone by train, but I had promptly negatived this proposal, saying that we would proceed straight home rather than break up our happy party. Only ten days remained, and as we had motored through the most interesting towns of Spain, and only Valencia and

THERE WAS NOT HALF A MILE THAT WAS NOT COVERED WITH SHARP, LOOSE STONES
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Barcelona remained, I determined to put Mercédès on the train as far as the frontier. Another day was lost in obtaining a truck large enough for the car, and we had greater difficulty still in loading her by means of the totally inadequate arrangements at the tiny station. At last it was done, and we proceeded to Valencia. Here I made special arrangements by which Mercédès was attached to the night express on which we travelled. Thus, to our great regret, we passed through Peterborough's country, without seeing the scenes over which his brilliant genius performed such miracles, through a portion of Spain that we were forced to leave for another tour. At Barcelona we had six hours to wait, and then, with Mercédès, left for the frontier. At Port-bou, the Spanish *douane*, I signed the special forms and passed Mercédès through to France. At Cerbère, one mile of darkness, we emerged into the sunshine; the gauge of the railway track narrows to suit the French railways and also for frontier protection. Transferring Mercédès from her Spanish truck to a French one, we reached Perpignan. A day we spent here ridding Mercédès of her terrible accumulation of dust and replacing the four wrecks of tyres with new ones. Thus refreshed, we commenced our six days' journey, and looking for a last time upon the Pyrenees, with a sigh of regret turned our backs on Spain and all her wondrous cities. Before I leave the Peninsula let me say just a word for the Spanish people. Ever courteous and good-tempered, they treated us in the most friendly fashion; even the muleteer, struggling with his terrified animals,

found time to smile. The hotel-keepers in the little country villages, Spanish to the core, never charged a *peseta* above their usual prices. Honesty, surprising in its sincerity, is one of their chief characteristics; and we shall always have a warm feeling in our hearts for one of the redeeming features of Spain—her people!

Béziers we reached and left behind, only just in time to avoid being mixed up in the great wine disputes, and traversed the beautiful road to Millau. Then through the gorges of the Tarn, rivalling almost the Great Cañon of the Colorado in magnificence, on to Clermont-Ferrand in beautiful Auvergne. Leaving the mountains of the Midi we flew over the long flat roads to Paris. A day in Paris, and next morning we left for Boulogne, this time shipping Mercédès to British soil, and thus ending our Southern Tour.

Instead of feeling tired of automobiling we were more enchanted with the sport than ever, and the change from our six months' almost continual travel was more novel than welcome. Strange as it may at first seem, I had prevailed upon Sheila, Dorothy and Ken, to prepare themselves for another tour in a month's time. First they had been undecided, but when I pointed out that if we delayed longer we should lose the cream of the summer, and subtly reminded them of the glories of the Alps, they succumbed, and we agreed to resume our wanderings in one month's time.

NOTE.—Part of the tour through Spain was described in an article in the Automobile Club Journal, August 1907.

OH, THAT JOURNEY OVER THE ROYAL ROADS
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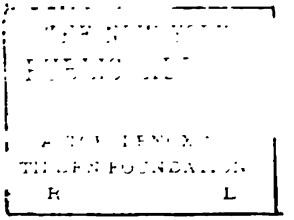
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PART III

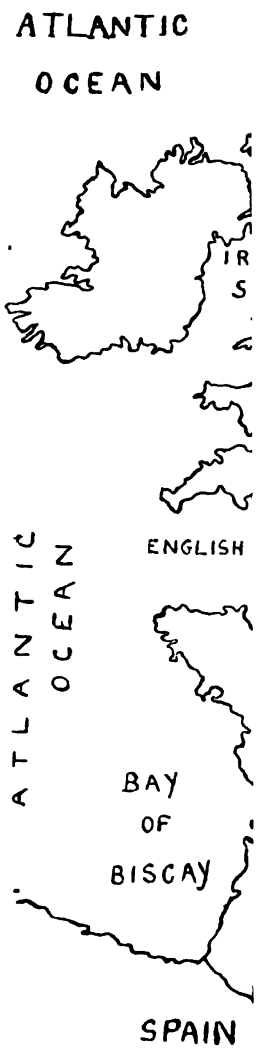
NORTHERN EUROPE

MAP III.—NORTHERN EUROPE

John o' Groat's : Inverness : Edinburgh : London : Folkestone : Boulogne : Amiens : Paris : Ste. Menehould : Verdun (German frontier) Luxemburg : Coblenz : Cologne : Hanover : Hamburg : Kiel (Danish frontier) Kolding : Odense : Copenhagen (Swedish frontier) Helsingborg : Halmstad : Göteborg : Halmstad : Helsingborg (Danish frontier) Copenhagen : Gjedser (German frontier) : Warnemünde : Nuremberg : Munich : Füssen (Austrian frontier) : *Fern Pass* : Nassereit : Telfs : Landeck : *Finstermünz Pass* : Neu Spondinig : Meran : Bozen : *Mendel Pass* : Malé : *Tonale Pass* (Italian frontier) : Edolo : *Aprica Pass* : Sondrio : Val Tellina : Fuentes : Chiavenna : *Splügen Pass* : Monte Splügen : Chiavenna : Fuentes : Colico : Lago di Como : Varenna : Lecco : Como (Swiss frontier) : Lugano : Lake Lugano : Cadenazzo : Bellinzona : Locarno : Lago Maggiore (Italian frontier) : Pallanza : Orta : Turin : Susa : *Mont Cenis Pass* (French frontier) : Chamonix : Geneva : Nyon : *The Dôle* : Besançon : Champagne : Amiens : Boulogne : Folkestone : London.

NOTE. Map III. For detail of route through Tirol, Switzerland and North Italy see red line Map I.

MAP III. NORT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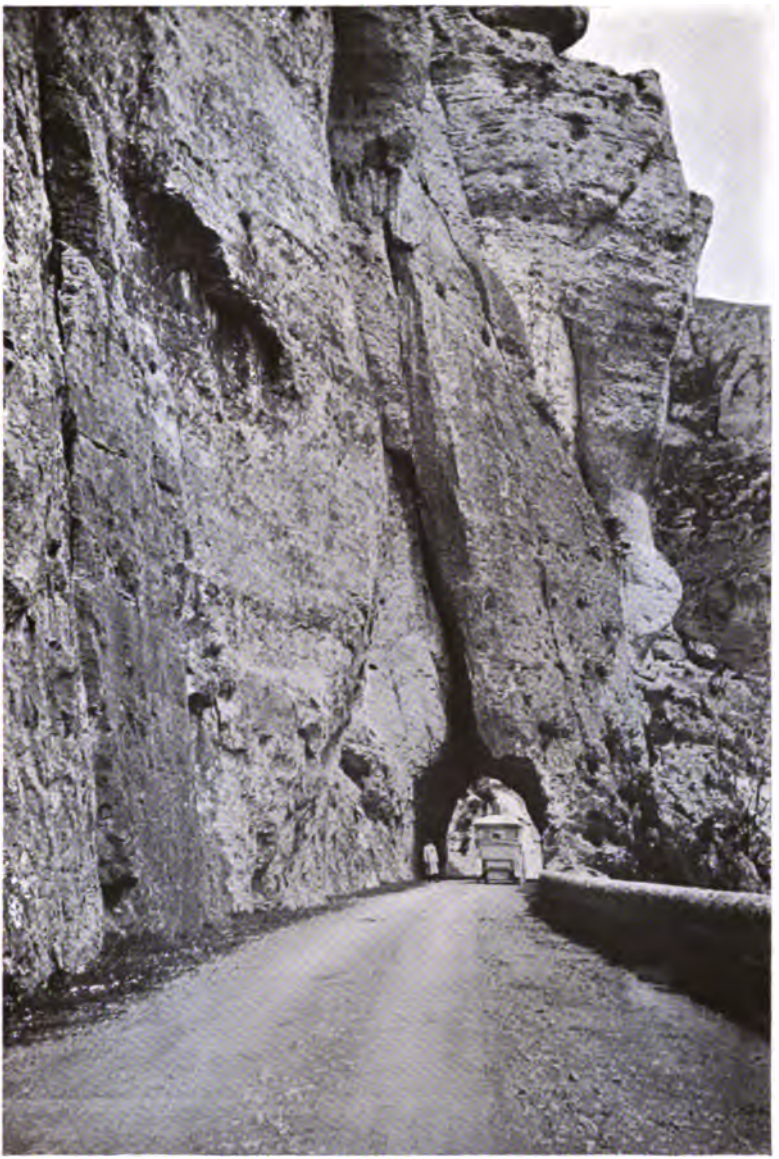
CHAPTER XVI

FROM JOHN O' GROAT'S TO COPENHAGEN

At the end of the month I drove with Mercédès to Graham Castle, and from its ancient doors we set out. Instead of proceeding directly south we turned to the north, and passing through Inverness and Bonar Bridge reached John o' Groat's. After spending a day upon its breezy cliffs we turned South. The journey to Folkestone is hardly worth describing, the roads are good but the police supervision a nightmare, and a week after leaving John o' Groat's, we landed in France. This tour I had decided should be a Northern one, and after a brief stay in Paris we started. Ken was at the wheel, and Dorothy sat beside him, while Sheila and I occupied the tonneau in lordly state. Paris in July was baking in the heat, and though the day was young, the beaming sun, from a cloudless sky, shone with unbearable heat upon the hot, dry streets. It was hardly fair to remind Ken of his first ride on Mercédès through Paris, but I could not resist the temptation, especially in view of the way in which he flashed us in and out of the thick traffic. He replied by driving Mercédès into a seemingly

inadequate space between a wine cart and a motor-'bus in a manner that made *me* gasp, so daringly and neatly was it accomplished. When I recovered breath, I heard a suppressed giggle from Dorothy, and I leant back in my seat deeming it safer not to taunt Ken till we were beyond the traffic-zone.

Again our way lay through the beautiful gardens of Vincennes, and, for a space, along the Paris-Nancy road. Through Châlon-sur-Marne, the unlucky; Ste. Menehould, where "Old - Dragoon Drouet" recognised his sovereign, we passed to Verdun, thrice unlucky, where we spent the night. Some military *fête* was in progress, and the town was packed solid with soldiers. Here and there an officer with his wife and family paraded its streets, taking the innumerable salutes with a smile and a nod. Here and there a group of officers stood chatting, and from the open doors of crowded *cafés* came the sound of music. In fact everything looked so bright and cheery that it was hard to realise the change that thirty years had wrought. All day we had rushed across France, at her best, yet a part of France that one can only pass through with feelings of sorrow at the thought of the tragedies it has witnessed. Unfortunate Louis, so near to freedom, and yet so far, fled along this road only to be captured and carried back—a prisoner—to the guillotine. In this fair land lies Sedan, once merely a remote village unknown to many, now a worldwide name as the place where impetuous bravery and patriotism fell before military genius and perfect organisation. The great march of the Prussians



THEN THROUGH THE GORGES OF THE TARN

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passed over these roads. And finally the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, perhaps the heaviest blow. Still time, the great healer, has laid his fingers upon this land and is slowly healing up the once open wound.

Towards the frontier the road passes by many factories, and the fair valleys are disfigured by ugly chimneys pouring out thick, black smoke. This tour I had been careful to obtain custom papers from the Royal Automobile Club for Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, depositing the money in London, and obtaining a free pass to enter these countries. This system is one of the many valuable privileges that the club confers upon its members for Continental travel. Leaving France we entered the little state of Luxemburg—and Germany. From the capital of that tiny kingdom we were favoured with one of the most beautiful drives in Germany along the banks of the swift Moselle. Upon the high hills on both banks the vines grow under a warm sun, terrace upon terrace, from the water's edge to the very summit. At one of the very pretty little villages upon its banks we stayed for tea, and, as the evening was descending, continued the twisting road. By a little ferry boat, not unlike those near Rome, we crossed the river, and upon the right bank reached Coblenz. At this gay little town 'twixt two rivers we stayed a few days, our windows looking upon the bridge of boats which opens continuously to the busy traffic of the Rhine. Between Coblenz and Cologne the scenery deteriorates by leaps and

bounds. "We must stay a day in Cologne, if only to visit its minster," Sheila had said, and naturally we did. I never compare cathedrals, for each has its own especial beauty, and what would appeal to me might not to those more deeply versed in architecture. Likewise I never attempt to describe their separate glories, but am content to enjoy their magnificence whenever I visit them, and to store their memory, undimmed by future sights, in its own little pigeon-hole in my mind. From Cologne we entered a suburb of smoky chimneys and noisy works, a forecast of our journey through Northern Germany. Gone were the long delightful spins we enjoyed in France; no longer the solitary carters pulled their horses sharply to one side of the road at the sound of the horn; the multitude of country people we encountered were all too attentive to business to bother themselves with our requests. The road was crowded with heavy traffic, and continuously took the most needless turns; even across open fields it would wind in the form of an "S," for no especial reason except, perhaps, contrariness. I do not want to speak against Germany, and I admit that the causes of annoyance were never deliberate —due only to the fact that the country is filled with a population who are always working, who are occupied every minute of the day, and therefore not likely to take an interest in, or go out of their way to oblige, a party of foreign pleasure-seekers. If one does feel continuously irritated with the slow carters and stupid people, when one views the signs of prosperity and industry around, one involuntarily has a

sort of sneaking regard for this race of hard workers; and coming uninvited into their country one must take it as it is, and not grumble because the people do not stop their work to attend to those in whom they take not the slightest interest. Germany, of all countries, I have ever found the least enjoyable as far as motoring is concerned; but I always hate to hear a foreigner (I mean not a German) call that country ill names because he has not been treated with the courtesy and easy smiles of the warm nations of the South. On our journey to Hanover we passed through a multitude of towns whose names I forget, and we were rather tired of the continuous worry of the road when we reached Bad Nenndorf. A children's *fête* was in full swing, and looked so inviting that we stayed to see it. Very pretty it was, enlivened by the strange costumes worn by the countrywomen, from the large buxom girls down to the tiny mites still holding their mother's hands. The *fête* seemed a great success, and the little ones enjoyed it immensely. Bad Nenndorf is celebrated for its mud-baths, but the pictorial postcards exhibited in the shop windows do not tend to encourage the timid to sample them.

Through Hanover we passed on our way to Hamburg, which we reached after enjoying a good run; the country is more open, and here and there we obtained some fine spins. At Hamburg the breezes from the North Sea and the Baltic meet, and in summer keep the town delightfully fresh, though during winter the good folks would be quite willing

to dispense with their services. The town is bright and cheery, as though anxious to give Americans a welcome to Europe when they arrive by the German greyhounds. While in Hamburg we visited Hagenbeck's Zoological Gardens, where wild animals are given the nearest approach to freedom. A space is cut in a rock somewhat resembling the stage of an ordinary theatre, and on three sides the rocky walls rise some fifteen feet above the ground and overhang. On the stage about a dozen beasts—lions and tigers—are given full liberty; between them and the public is cut a trench, not very wide or deep; to the edge of this ditch the beasts come and roar with impotent rage at the people who are just out of their reach. The trench is hidden from view some paces back, and for a moment, the first time one visits the Zoo, the sight of people walking within a few yards of the wild beasts is startling in the extreme. Likewise the Polar bears and seals are separated by an invisible barrier, shaped and coloured like blocks of ice, and all kinds of animals live in the open air free from visible restraint. On another rock a herd of chamois and goats are springing from pinnacle to pinnacle, and everywhere are signs of comfort and freedom for the captive beasts. A more humane method it is impossible to conceive, and very different from the Zoological Gardens at Stuttgart, where the animals are treated in the other extreme.

From Hamburg the country is flat and the roads are good; we were travelling up the narrow neck of land, Schleswig-Holstein, with the North Sea on

our left, and the Baltic on our right. At Kiel we lunched, and drew a breath of fresh air from its crowded Haven. Soon after leaving the town we crossed the Kiel Canal, joining two great seas. The railway is here banked up to a great height and crosses the canal by an iron bridge high enough to allow the largest ship to pass beneath; there is no second bridge for road traffic, the road mounting up the side of the steep bank till it is level with the railway. Here the road ends and we were told to follow the railway track across the bridge. It was rather a peculiar sensation that long journey high above the glistening water; the interlaced iron structure so familiar and reminiscent of railway travelling flashed past our eyes; the shining rails stretching far beyond the bonnet, conjured up pleasant thoughts of meeting an express from which, of course, there would be no escape. Naturally the man who admitted us on to the narrow track should know when a train is due, though signalmen have been known to make mistakes, &c. &c.! While we were still discussing the exciting problem we reached the end of the bridge and regained the road. As we left the metals we met a long procession of circus people, with their vans and the usual paraphernalia inseparable from a travelling show, and we congratulated ourselves that we had not been five minutes later, or they five minutes earlier, for there was no room upon the bridge to pass another vehicle. The Schlei, a broad open patch of water, is joined to the Baltic by a narrow ribbon of sea; it is a "Loch" as Ken would say.

The road follows the water's edge and the little capital Schleswig, now the residence of the Dukes of that name, proudly traces its origin back to Charlemagne and is a quaint little township.

As we approached Denmark, the horses we encountered became more and more restive, rearing up on their hind legs and often nearly getting beyond control of their drivers. At one place we did far more damage than the 'enemy' by becoming hopelessly involved in the midst of some army manœuvres. Our greatest triumph in the way of discomfiting the troops was in the case of a large company of cavalry which, alas, we met. Though we carefully drove Mercédès on to the side of the road, and stopped her engine, the beautiful formation of the regiment was instantly broken and the riders scattered to the four corners of the earth. Many horses positively refused to pass while others promptly bolted, and despite the efforts of their riders, disappeared down the road like racehorses. Many developed the gentle art of rubbing their rider's legs against every tree or wall within sight, and several others, seeing the opportunity, made hay in a neighbouring field. The air was full of German oaths, big, strong, healthy oaths which echoed and rumbled like a miniature cannonade fired at us, the innocent cause, as we remained silently and peacefully upon the grass by the wayside. Continuing our drive, history repeated itself: every horse we encountered, whether it was dragging firewood or harnessed to a smart trap, behaved in like manner, and the result was generally the same.

By the time we reached the frontier we had been the cause of three slight accidents, and of one spirited horse depositing its load, a trap and three persons, bodily in the ditch; no harm was done however, and we parted on friendly terms. The Danes admitted us without demanding duty, as though desirous of making up for our jingled nerves. Kolding, the first important town, lies but a few miles from the frontier, but those few miles were sufficient to demonstrate to us that, as far as horses were concerned, we had stepped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Kolding is a very busy country town, and the stir we made in its crowded market-place was hardly calculated to endear us to the hearts of those present, though our memory might linger, and rankle, in their minds for years to come. Like the spirit of unrest, we passed through the streets, reaching the hotel, after a series of narrow escapes of sending sundry horses, with their carts, into the shop windows, and drove into its yard, a haven of peace.

At the police station, where I was told that it was necessary to report our entry into Denmark (though I wondered that the report had not already been lodged there by numerous indignant horse-drivers), the police official spoke perfect English, as every one in Denmark seemed to do, and wrote out a permit to drive and also presented us with fresh number plates. In addition, he sent a soldier to the hotel with a stencil marker, some eight inches by four, to mark "Kolding Politi" in red paint upon any part of Mercédès that I should name, so long as

it was easily seen. I arrived just in time to prevent him placing it in the centre of the spotless back panel of the tonneau, and induced him to stencil it upon the shield over one sprocket, and with a *pourboire* he departed.

From Kolding we set out for Copenhagen, intending to cross to Finn and Zealand by the ferries carrying the trains. The short run to Fredericia was free from traffic, and there we waited for the great steam ferry.

The ferry-boat has somewhat the appearance of a dredger; it comes cautiously in till it touches the pier edge, down which the railway is laid, the last twenty feet or so being upon iron in order to enable it to be lifted and laid upon the ferry-boat's deck, to which it is firmly clamped. After the train had been backed upon the boat we followed with Mercédès along the railway lines to the back of the train on the boat, and after some awkward manœuvring squeezed her behind the last carriage, and thus between the train and the deep sea, she was carried across the small belt. It took just twenty minutes after leaving Jutland to reach Middelfart upon the Island of Fyen. The train was dragged off and we bidden to follow it. Climbing into our places we drove along the rails and at the order of a man in an imposing uniform, drove up a steep bank on to the station platform. We now found ourselves in a very delightful fix; either the auto-traffic had never been sufficient, or the railway officials had been too lazy to lay a separate pathway from the boat to the road, and the only possible out-

let lay in passing along the narrow station platform in the way that ordinary luggage was trundled. The platform was narrow, but, to make matters doubly worse, it was divided by a row of iron columns supporting the roof. Between these and the wall we stuck, our canopy shifting the station clock about six inches out of its normal position and suffering in that noble effort. The train that had crossed on the same boat with us was still in the station, every window filled with the heads and shoulders of a deeply interested crowd. The guard and porters were far too busy endeavouring to steer us clear and save their beloved clock, to attend to the train, and it was only when we finally stuck that they seemed to recollect their duty, and the train at once started, carrying from the scene the excited passengers, loudly protesting, and unwilling to miss the fun. At last we got free by a series of contortions which nearly wrecked the station clock, the porters and officials raving like maniacs at the sacrilege to their sacred ticker, from which hung a piece of mackintosh, a souvenir of the luggage cover from the roof of the car.

Odense, the largest town of the island, is a quiet little place with an excellent hotel where we halted for lunch. It was afternoon when we continued our journey. The country is one large farm and the horses are the most troublesome animals imaginable; time after time we only just avoided nasty accidents and were glad to reach Nyborg without any serious mishap. We had an hour to wait for the ferry-boat and occupied the time in devoutly hoping that the

landing at Korsör was equal to the one here. In due time the ferry put in an appearance and we were told to drive on ahead of the train. The distance across the Great Belt is about fourteen miles and the passage occupies an hour and a quarter. In the cabins, beneath the train, we enjoyed an excellent tea, little dreaming what we were about to suffer. At Korsör our troubles began; the ferry-boat turned and went in backwards, thus necessitating our turning round upon the uneven rails. Directly we left the deck to follow the railway track our wheels sank deep into the sand, for instead of laying a few paltry boards between the rails there was nothing whatever upon the soft ground. A grinning official informed us that we should have to cross half a dozen sets of rails to reach the firm road. With a spurt I set Mercédès at the first rail; over she went and then sank deep into the sand, still crawling along, till her back wheels touched the rail, and then she stuck: restarting the engine I let in the clutch, but the only result was that the back wheels flew madly round, sending the sand flying in showers and burying themselves deeper and deeper into the ground till at last the petrol tank rested upon the metals. Things were getting awkward, and to enliven matters a porter rushed up to say that we must move the automobile as a train was coming. Without offering to assist, a party of officials and porters stood round us grinning like apes as they watched our ineffectual efforts to move. I called for planks and stones, and to wake the men up, shook a handful of money beneath their noses; this

had a good effect, and after a time several men brought boards and stones. With the brake hard on, we dug deep in front of the wheels, burrowing as far as we dare beneath; then rammed down stones for a foundation, then boards till we had a right angle of hard ground to the top of the rail. When the wheels got a grip of the hard surface Mercédès climbed easily over the rail, only to sink down into the sand upon the other side. The number and quality of the planks did not permit of laying a track and we had to go through the same performance each time. It took an hour to cross those railway lines where, had there been a simple wooden pathway, it would not have occupied half a minute. We learnt afterwards that every car that crosses has to go through the same awful process of extracting itself from the sand and that the officials take a delight in watching the cars floundering; also it is a source of never-ending revenue. Mercédès is much heavier than most cars, also she is slung low for high speeds, and therefore perhaps suffered more than a lighter car would. Nevertheless it is a scandal and a disgrace for a country to countenance such an outrage. As the railways are run by the Government there is no redress for damage or official negligence, and the only way to protest is to leave the country as soon as possible and avoid it in future.

It was dark by the time we reached the firm road, and as we were tired out both in mind and body, we determined to stay in Korsör. The roads leading to the hotel were up, and again we floundered

hopelessly in the mud, all but sticking in the clinging ground. Quite half an hour was lost in by-streets before we reached the hotel. Danish is a language that I have never studied, and there was no one in the little inn who spoke aught else, till one gentleman visitor came forward and hinted that he understood a little German and French. By his help we secured rooms and ordered dinner. Mercédès could find no shelter, but took a rest after her hard labour in the hotel yard, open to the street; covered up though she was with her curtains and rugs, she was not left in peace; almost all night long the silence was broken by the sound of the horn, blown by stray visitors, and once I had to go downstairs (which I did three at a time) only to find the yard empty and her tormentors gone.

The sun was well up in the sky when we breakfasted next morning, and shone brightly as we swept out of the yard on our way across Zealand. The country is flat, and, as before, one huge farm; as for the horses, they revelled in the same state of wildness. Roskilde is the only town of interest; the ancient capital of the kingdom retains very little of its former importance, save its cathedral, the last resting-place of the Danish kings. An hour's run brought us to the outskirts of Copenhagen, and we made our way through the traffic to the Angleterre, facing a large open square. A band was playing before the hotel, and we had some difficulty in forcing our way through the large crowd to its doors.

In Copenhagen they will tell you that no garage

existeth, but believe them not. Scarcely had the hotel opened telephonic negotiations with a livery stable for space to house Mercédès than I was accosted by a man who, giving me his card, said he kept a garage. A very fair place it was too, and with a stock of tyres, inner tubes, and a good workshop (the latter as unnecessary for Mercédès as the former were imperative). We spent a fortnight in the capital and enjoyed every day. Denmark was new to us, and the novelty of not understanding the language lent an added, if somewhat inconvenient, charm. The city is full of interest from its harbours and quaint locks to its fine gardens, and we spent a happy time. Perhaps it was the sense of complete rest after our journey, which up to now had been much less enjoyable than the previous ones. The roads were not so good, the scenery miserably poor; but even these we might have excused had we been treated to any glorious monuments or wonderful sights, but nothing up to now had we seen worth mentioning.

A thing that struck us while in Denmark was the enormous quantity of bicycles: everyone seemed to go awheel, and as we passed through villages we were invariably accompanied by an escort of cyclists who delighted in piloting us, and once they ascertained our destination, undertook the office of guides extraordinary, riding before, behind, and beside us till we reached the open road.

CHAPTER XVII

A CHAPTER OF ADVENTURES

WITH reference to the ferry to Sweden, I made exhaustive inquiries, for I had determined to put Mercédès on the train to cross rather than risk another experience like Korsör, but we were assured that both landings were perfectly hard, and acting upon that assurance set out. From Copenhagen the road that follows the water's edge passes through the deer forests and is forbidden to autos as far as Rungslid, about half-way to Helsingör. The other road, the one we took, ran some miles inland and joins the water at that village. The ferry at Helsingör is the best of the three, and the landings are both firm and good and presented no difficulties whatever. As the boat leaves the harbour, the great castle of Kronborg stands out majestically from the land, and one is reminded of Hamlet and the Ghost scene upon its walls. The passage is short, and twenty minutes after leaving, Mercédès stood upon Swedish soil.

From the R.A.C., I had learnt that the custom duty for cars was 15 per cent. *ad valorem*, payable only upon landing, and had therefore provided

myself with £300 in gold; this I deposited at the custom house, with the British Vice-Consul as witness. The papers signed, Mercédès was free to proceed, but we were told to be at the police-station next day for further formalities. As we drove off the landing-place, rain commenced to fall, and from that moment the weather changed, and we looked not upon the sun again in Sweden. However, the hotel was very comfortable, and we felt that things might be worse, though on expressing a wish for a bath, I was invited to take a walk down the street to the public baths. In fact, during the time we were in Sweden, baths in the hotels seemed to be unknown, while sitz-baths might have been an obscure Chinese implement of torture for all meaning the word appeared to convey, even when pointed out in the dictionary. The proprietor of the garage (for there was a garage with two little cars for hire), spoke English, and kindly accompanied us to the police-station. Leaving Mercédès in the pouring rain, we were shown into a bare office, and kept waiting some time. When, however, the official did arrive, he found difficulty in administering the law, and was visibly puzzled what to do. First he asked for all certificates as to our abilities and knowledge of handling the car. Thereupon I handed up my R.A.C. driving card, my *permit de conduire*, and my Danish and English licences, also mentioning sarcastically that we had driven the car from Gibraltar. The English licence delighted him most, this and our passports. His only trouble was the fact that the licence was due to expire in two

months, and he therefore dated his licence to expire on that date. Then he presented us with new number plates, "H'borg No. 3" (the two previous cars being Swedish owned). Next we must return to the garage, he said, and must not drive the car until an official had examined her and given his certificate to say that Mercédès was in good condition, that she would not constitute a danger upon the public road through any faulty design, that she was sound in wind and limb, or, in other words, that she must undergo an expert examination of every part. As we drove back to the garage I remarked to the proprietor that it seemed rather a large useless order to have Mercédès examined so minutely, though I knew she feared no expert, and would emerge triumphant from any examination; her record stood sponsor for that. The proprietor was much amused, and, closing one eye, whispered that the technical expert who was to give a certifi- of construction, &c. &c., didn't know an inlet valve from an ignition tappet. "He knows nothing of a car, but will take his fee," he added. When the official arrived some hours later, he consulted the proprietor, and together they examined the bonnet. On learning that it was hollow, the expert, stifling his surprise, had a look inside: then he sat in the bucket seats one after the other, and finally requested us to start the engine. Dennis did so, and he listened gravely to the sound of the exhaust. Afterwards he asked that the car should be moved by its own power backwards and forwards in the garage. This done he appeared satisfied and produced his

bill for 10 kronen, which I paid, and he departed, promising to send the certificate as soon as it was ready. "He wanted a run in the car," said our friend the proprietor, when the official had vanished in the rain, "but I told him it was too much trouble, and he said it didn't matter." An hour later a boy arrived with the "Certificate," which, being translated, informed the authorities of Sweden that so-and-so had this day examined and tested Mercédès and found that she would be perfectly safe to be at large upon the public road, and was of good construction. I still retain the paper as a curiosity; it is worthy of framing.

For three mortal days it drizzled with rain, and although the weather was little better, the fourth day found us ready to start. The Karman, a fine old castle above the town, historical in ancient wars, was almost hid by the sheets of rain as we passed beneath it, bound for the North. A narrow road leads into the country similar to a fourth-rate English lane, and in an exceedingly bad condition on account of the torrents of rain. The one or two horses we met promptly bolted into the neighbouring fields, and in less than an hour we had had our fill of narrow escapes. Many times on meeting a horse and trap, we at once backed Mercédès any distance till we reached a gateway into a field through which the horse could be led, if it could be persuaded to refrain from making a hole in the hedge to get there. Often we came unexpectedly upon a horse, or pair, standing without a driver, by the roadside. Directly the animals caught sight of

us there generally ensued a pretty circus and we passed safely, by a miracle, between dancing horses and running men, and crept slowly onwards to encounter other dangers. Now and then the road crossed barren moors, not unlike Scotch scenery, where the cattle are kept from straying by low walls of loose stones, another link with Scotland, and across the road are numerous gates all of which we had to open and close as we passed through. At Halmstad we spent the night, though we had only made sixty miles. We had had quite enough, for it had been a very weary journey, full, to the brim, of annoyances. We had, moreover, all but caused several severe accidents, besides which we were heartily sick of the paltry road and wretched weather, and longed for the bright skies of Andalucia and sunny Italy. The hotel was connected with a pleasure garden and did not provide meals, thus forcing its visitors to don mackintoshes and wander out in the wet night to search for the restaurant in the damp grounds. This we excused for dinner, but next morning on ringing for breakfast to be brought as usual to our rooms, we were informed that we must go for a walk through the rain (it still rained), to the garden *café* to obtain it. That naturally put us off waiting for the weather to clear, and we set out as soon as possible. The road was even worse than on the previous day, narrow, and deep in mud, but that was nothing compared to the trouble we had with horses. I reflected on what the garage proprietor at Helsingborg had said when he first saw Mercédès. "For

why do you come with such a huge machine to Sweden? The horses they will not stand it." We did our best to abate their fright, by covering the bright lamps and stopping as soon as we espied one, but all in vain. Twice during the first hour we were saved from committing manslaughter by an act of Providence (perhaps it was St. Christophe, nailed to the dash), and once a tragedy was averted only by a miracle. We only made a place called Falkenberg, about forty-five miles, and, though early in the afternoon, decided to stay and endeavour to get dried. We were rather silent during dinner, and when Sheila sadly quoted the Alps, we smiled weakly and earnestly wished we were back in their midst. Next day we started early, determined to make a journey, and did the hundred miles to Gottenburg. That day finished us; from early morn to dewy eve (very dewy by the way) we were in the midst of alarms and were a source of danger and trouble to the whole countryside. One man did indeed get hurt, while others were more lucky. Of ourselves we ran no danger except it was of arrest, but I could see that the anxiety and constant strain upon the nerves were telling; and that Sheila and Dorothy were hiding beneath a brave face a magnitude of suffering and compassion for the terrified people we met. We talked the situation carefully over that evening. "It isn't fair to the people with horses," said Ken, "it's awfully hard luck on them." Dorothy agreed: "It would spoil the tour if a serious accident occurred through us, and oh! I can't forget the

fright upon the faces of some of the women we met," added she.

"And you, Sheila," I asked, turning to her. "You know best, Roy," she answered, looking straight into my eyes, "is it worth while—the risk to the poor people upon the road, compared with our own inclinations—and then the Alps——"

"You're right," I said, "it isn't cricket, we'll turn back, right here, as the Americans say, and make a bee-line straight south and never rest a day till we reach Tirol."

Sheila's eyes sparkled, and the whole company seemed to gather new life and lean forward with enthusiasm to hear further particulars.

"We'll motor back through Copenhagen," I continued, "to the extreme south of the island and take the greatest ferry of all to Warnemünde in Germany and avoid Schleswig-Holstein."

"Let's tell Dennis," ejaculated Sheila eagerly. "It will give him an appetite."

Dennis being sent for was delighted with the news, and returned to his well-earned dinner, literally wreathed in smiles.

It is never nice to turn back, and had Ken and I been alone, we should have persevered, but I saw that the ladies, no matter how sportingly they denied it, were secretly suffering from the incessant strain upon the nerves. The journey to Copenhagen was a replica of the Northern one and save for a few mishaps, and once in and out of the clutches of the police, we left Sweden without a stain upon our characters. The garage owner was

not surprised to see us return, though he seemed astonished we had got Mercédès so far. The customs returned the £300 in notes, and we left Sweden, in a perfect downpour of rain, with devout feelings of relief. At a later date we hope to see its beauties *en auto*, but only when we can do so with a minimum of danger to its people.

As we were told that there was no road from Copenhagen to the southern ferry, I arranged to have Mercédès shipped by the night train to await us in Germany, and we left next morning. The distance from Gjedser to Warnemünde is about thirty miles and the ferry takes two hours. Half the train is put upon one boat in two lengths, side by side, while another boat follows with the other half. The ferry steamers are like battleships, and the trains are clamped to the decks by heavy iron chains. The passage is open, all the way across, to the full force of the Baltic, and on the day we crossed, though fine, a heavy sea was running, a sea that would have upset our Channel service. Many people were ill, and the effect of sitting in a railway carriage and being tossed up and down produced a most peculiar sensation. Nearly everybody left their seats to walk up and down the upper deck, a huge structure with cabins and a dining saloon above the trains and high above the angry sea. Luckily we are all good sailors, and enjoyed it immensely.

Warnemünde was crowded with visitors; all the 14,000 people which the place proudly boasts visit it annually, seemed to have arrived. The wind

from the Baltic shook and rattled our bedroom windows, which looked upon the open shore, and the sea, beating in in great rollers. In the day-time the stretch of sand is covered with high-backed basket-chairs, reminiscent of the Dutch watering-places, and crowded with people. Two days later we left on our six-hundred mile direct journey south, to the Alps, across Germany. In the north we had trouble with horses, and times innumerable were nearly the cause of serious accidents. The fact that the majority of horse drivers were absolutely incapable of managing their animals was in itself a source of continual danger. A single instance will suffice. Coming into the suburbs of a busy town, whose name I have forgotten, we were proceeding quietly along a broad thoroughfare; there were plenty of people about and we drove with caution. Some distance ahead, standing beside the kerb, were a pair of horses harnessed to a dray. Upon the driving seat sat a coachman, a little man in an outrageous livery and with a pair of side-whiskers that instantly reminded one of the well-known figure of Monkey-Brand. He was holding the reins carelessly in one hand and chatting with two or three men standing on the path. A leather trunk was resting upon the other seat beside him in front. Directly we came in sight the horses cocked their ears forward (in a way we knew all too well) and began to grow restive. I was driving, and at once stopped Mercédès some fifty feet away. Instead of trying to quiet his animals the coachman never moved, but with a sickly smile actually

watched them endeavour to turn round. The near horse tripped over the kerb and fell on its back, and the other, incredible as it may sound, fell over the pole and its comrade, and also landed on its back: and there they lay like two kittens on a hearth-rug. The coachman losing his head, let the reins fall between the pair and sat dumfounded, holding on to the leather bag. It was exactly like a *tableau vivant*, and for a moment every man upon the scene stood perfectly still, rooted to the spot by astonishment, while the coachman sat upon the box like a monkey, and chattered with fright. Then there was a simultaneous rush to loose the horses, which had begun to kick. Ken, Dennis and I climbed down and went to help. Eventually the horses were freed and it was found that the only damage done was the loss of two shoes by one horse, and the destruction of the dash by the other. Luckily there had been plenty of witnesses who swore that we were not to blame, for by now a large crowd had gathered, and Monkey-Brand, having recovered from his fright, was addressing them and loudly demanding our instant arrest. Finally we returned to Mercédès and drove on. How it was that no arms were broken in freeing the kicking horses, or why the paralysed coachman did not fall after the reins between the horses, will never be explained.

Verily the age of miracles is not yet passed! This example is only one of the many experiences that we were treated to, and it was not until we reached Bavaria that we could breathe with comfort, in fact for the remainder of the tour it was

impossible to meet a horsed conveyance without involuntarily experiencing a fear that the whole concern would be shattered to matchwood and the driver be thrown, a mangled corpse, at our feet.

Germany, as I have said before, is one huge workshop, broken here and there by immense forests, and we were quite glad to reach Munich. Our only reward for the journey was Nürnberg, and the rest there was both welcome and enjoyable. There is the choice of two roads into Tirol, the Fern Pass, and the road by Walchen-See and Seefeld; both are beautiful, but I chose the former as being longer and more interesting. By now we considered that our troubles were over, but we were to learn different, and it was while leaving Münich that we providentially avoided, by a hair's breadth, the nearest semblance to a fatal accident during the whole of this somewhat exciting tour. This time it was not horses that were to blame, simply a common or garden bicycle. We had just left the hotel, and were passing slowly, on the second speed, along the road leading to the station, a fine broad street crossed by many similar roads. The first thing I knew of the affair was, as we reached one of the side streets, a shout from Ken, and with the tail of my left eye I saw the bent back of a man come like a rocket end on into Dennis. What really happened was that a man upon a bicycle, pedalling as hard as he could, with his head down and his breast upon the handle-bars in the orthodox attitude of racing cyclists, and unheeding the main thoroughfare, had come with dreadful force straight into us. Directly

I heard the shout I pulled up at once, so quickly that when we jumped down we found both the man's legs beneath the car, the right one touching the back wheel, but uninjured. His bicycle was a mere heap of twisted iron, but strange to say, he himself was unhurt, owing his life to poor Dennis. Dennis had been sitting on his accustomed seat behind the dash at Ken's feet, and had been looking the other way. The man's head smashed into him, before he had realised that anything out of the usual was happening, and we found him doubled up with pain. Had the man run into us at any other part, even an inch or two to right or left, he must have been instantly killed, his head shattered like an eggshell: or had he come from the opposite direction, no power on earth could have saved him, for in place of Dennis he would have been received by the steel gear-and-brake-levers. Again, had I not been able to stop Mercédès in half her own length, his legs would have been ground to a pulp. As it was, he scrambled to his feet and began loudly to quarrel with us. A policeman who, luckily for us, had witnessed the accident, elbowed his way through the crowd and took command. Peremptorily ordering the man to hold his tongue, he took our names and addresses, and after about ten minutes' talk he expressed his opinion that no blame whatever attached to us, and gave us full permission to proceed. The cyclist looked so miserable that I slipped a 10-mark piece into his hand, though in reality he deserved imprisonment, for had we not stopped his mad rush he would have

killed the first child, or anything weaker than himself, that got in his path. Instead of being grateful he refused the money and demanded double. The policeman again interfered, and I dropped the 10 marks back into my pocket. The policeman cleared a path through the overwhelming crowd, and we proceeded on our way. Dennis looked and felt very ill for some time after; he it undoubtedly was who had saved the man's life at what might have been the cost of his own; but a few days in the Alps brought him to rights again. Had a steam-roller or wine-cart been in our place, a funeral would have resulted, and we congratulated ourselves upon getting out of a serious mess so fortunately. Füssen lies upon the borders of Tirol, and was the last village we stayed at in Germany. The proprietor of the hotel endeavoured to persuade us to take a carriage and pair and visit a fine old castle eight hours' drive each way, automobiles forbidden. Our answer may be better imagined than described.

It was in glorious weather and almost tropical sunshine that we entered Austria, surrendering gladly our German number plates and donning those supplied by the Austrians. Our R.A.C. papers acted like magic, and saved us the annoyance of depositing in gold the usual 1500 krs. The scenery of the Fern Pass is very beautiful, and forms an exquisite gateway into Tirol. Soon after leaving the frontier we passed through Reutte, a little village with many strange and quaintly painted houses; one or two are very full of colour and help to give the place an added interest. Leaving the village

we commenced to climb into the familiar firs and sweet-smelling pines till we reached Lermoos, lying at the foot of the barren Wetterstein chain, whence commences proper the finest mountain pass between Tirol and Bavaria. Cutting through the luxurious pines, the road mounts easily and steadily in full view of the rugged hills and high above the dark blue waters of the Blindsee which lie directly beneath. Still climbing, it reaches the summit, about 4000 feet above the sea and then descends clinging to one side of a valley. The old road, passing the Castle of Fernstein, is forbidden as unsafe, but the new one is good and well-constructed. In the valley, surrounded by thick fir glades, glistens the dark green Lake of Fernstein, like a mirror upon a velvet cloth; in its midst rises the decayed Sidmundsburg, once the famous hunting-box of that Archduke. Crossing a river, which is born in the lake, we reached Nassereit, a little village that ten years ago was burnt to the ground. In the open grounds of its unpretentious inn we enjoyed a very fair lunch. Nassereit lies at the junction of three roads, that from Germany splits in two, one towards Innsbruck, and the other to Imst. As our intentions were to make for Landeck and go over the Finstermünz to Meran, we followed the road to the left. Seven miles further we joined the Inn Valley and continued the path we had taken on our previous Alpine tour. Landeck lay basking in the sunshine and for tea we stayed at its familiar hotel, leaving afterwards for Hoch Finstermünz. The beautiful valley was being lost in the darkness as we com-

menced the climb, and we reached the excellent little hotel just in time to escape having to light the lamps. In the morning we rose early and climbed rapidly to the summit and greeted our old friend the Ortler, surrounded by his snowy subjects. A swoop down into the valley and we passed through Neu Spondinig looking again upon the Stelvio Glaciers. A hot dusty ride followed to Meran, still unbearably hot and still with its streets under repair. Bozen likewise was absolutely unbearable, and an hour after leaving its steaming streets we were upon the summit of the Mendel, 4000 feet above the vineclad Brenner and in full view of the sunset upon the glowing Rosengarten. From Landeck we had, of course, followed our previous journey over these two passes, but after our experiences in the North, we enjoyed their beauties even more than on the previous visit, the rest and peace after our constant anxieties being indescribably welcome. From Malé commenced a new road; as far as that point we had traversed last year when we journeyed from Mendel to Riva over the narrow Campiglio pass. Leaving Mendel we very soon reached Malé, and from that village commenced the climb over the Tonale Pass, 6000 feet high, and one of the most beautiful of the passes of the Alps. The road winds quickly upwards and reaches a place called Pizzano where hangeth out the Austrian *douane:* To them we surrendered up our number plates, and on spurting from their doors quitted Tirol. This time it had been but a very short visit to that beautiful land, though we had enjoyed it tenfold and were sorry to leave.

The road clings to the edge of the hill, and ever points upwards, winding in many curves and acute elbows as it follows the uneven mountainside, high above the valley which dropped sheer from beneath the wheels, and as we leant back in our seats we could look over the road's edge down a straight drop of 3000 feet or more. The climb was glorious, the deserted and winding road with its perilous turns coupled with the pace at which we travelled, was perfecty exhilarating; for over six weeks Mercédès had been held in check, but here I let her have full liberty, and she whirled us up the Pass at an exciting speed. Losing sight of the deep valley we left the region of firs, and reached the summit of the hill which separates Austria and Italy. On our left, the jagged summits of the Presanella glaciers rose into the clouds; a solitary soldier, in Italian uniform and carrying a rifle, stepped into view and held up his hand, telling us that he must ride upon the car as far as the custom house. Some distance below we came to a small stone house, and at the request of the soldier, stopped; several soldiers lounged out to discuss our appearance and stare at us. Our papers were examined and found satisfactory; the soldier again mounted to his seat to accompany us, whether for business or pleasure was not quite clear, as far as Ponte di Legno where the chief *douane* is situated. The descent is very beautiful, especially in the Val Camonica, where the road is in full view of the little village down to which it climbs in many easy turns. At Ponte di Legno, we lost our guide, and after the usual formalities continued the easy descent by the

side of a tumbling stream. It was afternoon when we commenced to climb up the easy road over the Aprica Pass beneath the snows. The road is good, the gradient extremely easy, and we speedily reached the excellent little hotel upon the summit. The altitude is only 3800 feet; though the pass is beautiful, it is by no means grand or exciting like its greater sister, Tonale.

As on the morrow we would join the Val Tellina at Sondrio, we should naturally be upon old ground, having passed over it on our way to the Stelvio Pass last summer; we, like Hannibal, sighed for fresh worlds to conquer. On searching the map, I found, to my delight, that the frontier line of Switzerland and Italy passed over the summit of the famous Splügen Pass and calculated the road would be open upon the Italian and most glorious side: thereupon I proposed that we should quit the main road at Colico, where it joins Lake Como, and go to Chiavenna, the village at the foot of the Splügen upon the borders of the forbidden Engadine. I knew that the pass lay off the beaten track of automobiles, and it was therefore thrice welcome; moreover, it presented, from its contour, a more formidable and dangerous ascent than even the Stelvio. The proposal was hailed with delight, for up to now we had done nothing remarkable during our short passage through the Alps, and this promised to be an adventure after our own hearts, and even to rank with our law-breaking ride over the Klausen last year. "Ah," said the genial proprietor of the Aprica Hotel, "you can with ease go to Chiavenna, but you

will never reach the summit of the Splügen. You have never been? then you never will with your great machine." "Carriages and diligences go, don't they?" I asked, though I knew full well. "They do," replied the proprietor smiling. "Then will we," was my crushing answer, which failed totally to crush, for his only reply was a smile and a shrug of the shoulders. "This promises to be glorious," Sheila said, as we left the door. "I've had another talk with the proprietor, and he says that we shall never get Mercédès round the corners, which are worse and more dangerous than those of the Stelvio."

The descent of the Aprica is decidedly the best of the whole pass, the road slanting down one side of the valley through luxurious foliage, gradually preparing us for the great change between the Alps and the rich growth of Italy. Nothing in the Val Tellina seemed changed from our previous visit; the valley looked as peaceful and prosperous as ever, a healed wound bearing no signs of the terrible times it had suffered. Ere the road reached Lake Como, we crossed the railway and branched off to the right; a few miles further the road passed along the right bank of Lago di Mezzola, a tiny little lake draining into Como, and in the midst of beautiful scenery, the mountains rising sheer out of the water and seeming to bar all egress from the basin they form. Often the road passes through tunnels, crossing and recrossing the railway lines following the water's edge till it reaches the end of the lake. The Piano di Chiavenna is a short and beautiful valley enclosed

by lofty hills, covered upon the lower slopes with vineyards, and higher, with firs and pine forests. As we penetrated further into the mountains we perceived that the furthest end of the valley was hid in darkness and a storm was brewing, black masses of clouds descending and covering the summits of the highest hills. The old Roman town of Chiavenna, now a busy coaching centre, lies at the foot of two great passes, the Splügen and the Maloja, and is in direct communication with St. Moritz. In the centre of the town stands the unfinished *château* of De Salis, the last governor of the warlike Grisons. The weather was looking exceedingly threatening as we drove to the hotel door, and barely had we got Mercédès under the shelter of the barracks of the Alpine Regiment (that regiment very courteously permitting us to use its covered barracks as a garage), than the rain commenced to fall in torrents. The barometer, which lately had kept fairly high, following suit, also began to fall steadily. Being late in the season the proprietor of the hotel was very pessimistic as to the weather for the next day; also he assured us the pass was not only the finest in the Alps, but one of the most dangerous and difficult, and, as he looked at Mercédès, he added, "The corners are too small, for your long machine. Again, if it is rain here, upon the summit 7000 feet above, it will be snow; also, if you do get there you may not be able to return for many days." This was hardly cheerful, but if the weather would only clear up, the remainder of his wet blanket would make the climb more

interesting. Next morning, when I awoke, the rain was pattering against the bedroom window, and on looking out, the cobble-laid square presented a deserted and miserable appearance. The hills rising above the town were enveloped by the mists, and altogether it was as dreary a morning as could be imagined. We sat down to breakfast in cordial agreement that the weather was far too bad to proceed. The waiter informed us that "perhaps it will be so for a week, or perhaps clear up in one hour, or maybe the morrow might be better, or as bad, for—no, it could not be worse." After breakfast we wandered out, under umbrellas, to judge for ourselves. Chiavenna is beautifully situated, and from every point rise up towering hills now hidden by the driving mists. One or two diligence drivers, whom we consulted, shook their heads over the prospect of good weather. When lunch-time arrived it was raining as hard as ever, and after we had finished we resumed our observations. Sheila made the interesting discovery that the barometer had stopped dropping, and on being tapped interrogatively, it even jumped hopefully up a little. About 2.30 the rain ceased, and half an hour later one or two peaks were visible. The barometer having been consulted on an average about twice every five minutes, "It will not rain again," said one of the diligence drivers, who were lounging smoking at the hotel door, "but if you go, you will be in the clouds—to-morrow may be worse." I hastily called a council to decide whether or not to risk making the ascent, and we unanimously agreed to risk it.

Telling Dennis to put on the non-skids and bring Mercédès to the door, we rushed upstairs to get ready. In twenty minutes the luggage was down and strapped in its place, and we mounted to our seats. The news quickly spread that an automobile was going to make the ascent, and most of the villagers helped the hotel servants and staff to give us a hearty send-off, and amidst their good wishes we left the door. Sheila and Dorothy occupied the tonneau, and Ken sat next to me, who drove, Dennis with his wooden scotch taking his accustomed place ready for emergencies. The steep road out of the town was exceedingly slippery and sodden with the rain. Several short zigzags lifted the road higher and higher, in many places the gradient was exceedingly heavy. The clouds covered the summits of the surrounding hills and the wind was bitingly cold, suggestive of the snow hidden in their midst. As the road wound its way backwards and forwards it entered a scene of the wildest description; at one spot we passed the little chapel of Madonna di Calivaggio, where two pious *contadinelle*, 600 years ago, while picking chestnuts, swore that the Virgin appeared to them. Meanwhile the scenery had been undergoing a complete change, the luxurious vegetation and harvest fields gave place to wild rocks and threatening cliffs till it seemed as though a thousand avalanches had poured into the valley, filling it with enormous masses of rocks and boulders. Creeping round, and sometimes over the giant *débris*, which each moment threatens to sweep it from existence, the road slowly fights its way upwards.

Shelley might have been contemplating such a scene when he wrote:

> . . . "how hideously
> Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare and high,
> Ghastly, and scarred, and riven. Is this the scene
> Where the old Earthquake-demon taught her young
> Ruin? Were these her toys?"

About two thousand feet had we climbed when the road reached the summit of the valley of rocks and came to Campo Dolcino. "This name must have been given to it by travellers who have descended from the snows and dangers of the Splügen; there is nothing in the scene itself deserving the appellation," says Brockedon in his "Passes of the Alps." From Campo Dolcino to Pianazzo the road rises over 1200 feet in the two miles, and is, without exception, the most marvellous piece of road on any pass we have ever traversed. Even the Stelvio, Gotthard, Klausen, all fall into insignificance on comparison; on those passes the road is cut in zigzags upon a sloping mountain-side, but here the mountain is bare rock, and rises sheer up some thousands of feet. The road is blasted and the tourniquets are built out. It is the ascension of an almost sheer precipice; in many places the road tunnels in a circle through the mountain similar to those upon the St. Gotthard railway. Nearly the whole journey is under avalanche galleries and often the gradient is terrific; the turns are seldom more than fifty or sixty feet apart and so sharp that at every one, without exception, we had to reverse. This time there was

no hope save our brakes, as, except for a low wall, we were literally balanced over the valley directly beneath us. Once seen, this sight can never be forgotten, for one is in the presence of almost a superhuman feat, a superb triumph over the greatest barriers of Nature. At one spot the road comes into full view of the fall of the Pianazzo which springs impetuously over the rock and touches nothing for 800 feet till it reaches the valley. The mists enveloped the mountains above the summit of the fall, giving the impression of volumes of dense spray being thrown into the air and lending a gorgeous splendour to the scene. Up the face of this waterfall the road climbed in a way that positively made the hair bristle on my head. Above us the road disappeared into the rock and we could see it reappear higher still, turning upon corners, built by prodigious labour, out from the mountain, and continuing to rise by a series of marvellous contortions out of sight as it seemed, into the very heavens. I had thought that we were hardened to all mountain climbs, but that false notion was dispelled by the Splügen. The idea of a road climbing literally "on its hands and knees" up the face of a precipice that alone could be ascended by a party with ropes, was in itself enough to astonish the most hardened, but the way by which this was accomplished was positively terrifying. "The Stelvio's a fool to this," gasped Ken, as we stuck on a turn and held there by our brakes. Out leapt Dennis and backwards and forwards between the rock and the frail wall we

A SUPERB TRIUMPH OVER THE GREATEST BARRIER OF NATURE
THE SPLÜGEN PASS

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manœuvred till at last we faced the ascending road and leapt forward the short distance to the next turn. In one of the circular tunnels, where there was scarcely light enough to see, we came upon a flock of sheep and goats; the noise of the engine sounded like continuous thunder, terrifying the animals and causing much trouble before they could be got past, their driver regarding us with superstitious awe as though we were spirits from another world, and Mercédès a fiery dragon from the nether regions. At the summit of the precipice and also of the waterfall, we reached the tiny hamlet of Pianazzo, but without stopping rushed up the steep road before us which now clung to the face of a sloping mountain similar to the Stelvio or Gotthard, and tame after what we had passed. Here again almost the whole road passes through avalanche galleries, and as we were now enveloped by the clouds the light was exceedingly bad. It was the most sporting experience we ever enjoyed, for we knew absolutely nothing of where we were going or what we should be called upon to face, and, as the evening was advancing, were somewhat anxious to know what would become of us in the event of our failing to find suitable shelter at Monte Splügen. The Engadine was closed to automobiles and the only alternative to spending a night in the car upon the summit was a seven-mile walk to the little village of Splügen in the Swiss valley. Gallery succeeded gallery, and as we emerged from each we were met by blinding showers of mist through which we blindly groped, mounting ever upwards round

countless corners. After we seemed to have been climbing for hours, the road ran level beneath us and we reached a small cluster of houses dimly seen in the fading light. Monte Splügen at last, and the only shelter upon the pass, 700 feet beneath the summit. The tiny Poste-Hôtel was hospitality itself, and at the invitation of the Italian officers Mercédès stood in the building of their *douane.* The warm dining-room of the hotel was very welcome from the wet and piercing cold, and doubly so from the fact that we had half expected to find no shelter whatever. The hotel was crammed full with Italians and Swiss, who afforded us a cheery welcome. The proprietor, with all the courtesy of the true Italian, surrendered his room to Sheila and Dorothy, and Ken occupied a small room upon the same floor, while the proprietor and I obtained rooms in a house some distance away. After a hearty supper, well-cooked and very well appreciated, we chattered with the friendly visitors and despatched the usual multitude of post-cards. Outside, the rain beat upon the windows and the storm whistled round the hotel shaking the little building till it rocked again. In winter the snow reaches to the upper storey of the houses, and during blizzards, bells are rung continuously to guide travellers to the welcome refuge. We set our barometer, which had fallen nearly six inches, and prayed it to favour us with a good omen. One visitor told us that he had been out with his gun every day for a week in search of sport, but the only sport he got was a thorough drenching every day, and during the

whole week he had never even seen the snow upon the surrounding mountains. The wind was blowing icily as Dennis and I sought our beds, and were guided, by the proprietor and a lantern, out into the black night. The rain had ceased, and here and there a few stars could be seen, which augured well for the morrow. The bed was cosy, and after spreading my fur coat and two heavy rugs over the thick blankets, I crawled beneath them and remembered no more.

CHAPTER XVIII

FAREWELL TO THE ALPS

DENNIS woke me next morning and imparted good news: a moment later I was out of bed and rushed to the window to verify it. The morning was glorious, not a cloud disfigured the blue sky, and the sun well above the snow peaks shone brilliantly. Losing no time, I hurriedly splashed in cold water and dressed with alacrity. At the hotel door I encountered Sheila descending the stairs. Dorothy, she said, was still slumbering, and I went to Ken's room to knock him up. A muffled voice answered my attack on the door, informing me that he would be down in half an hour. Returning to the hall I found Sheila ready for a walk before breakfast.

It was simply magnificent upon the springy turf, and leaving the village we climbed a hill to get a better view of the snowy range of mountains that rose like giants from its very doors. A herd of shaggy cattle were grazing peacefully upon the steep slope, their musical bells sounding clear upon the still air. The atmosphere was exhilarating, and we felt able to walk for ever. Sheila was charmed with the exquisite view of the quiet village beneath

A QUIET VILLAGE BENEATH THE WORLD OF SNOW
MONTE SPLÜGEN

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the world of snow, and after we had admired it from about a dozen different places we were surprised at the time that had elapsed. Ken and Dorothy were half-way through their breakfast as we entered the warm dining-room, excusing themselves by saying that the sharp air had given them appetites that allowed of no delay. The coffee was strong and hot, and Sheila agreed that her tea was the best she had ever tasted. "I think that we should be tempting Providence if we stayed here to-day," I proposed, after Sheila had been making the others envious of our morning walk, "the day is so glorious that we ought to take advantage of it and drive to the summit, catch a glimpse of the Engadine, and return to Chiavenna. We could then be sure of enjoying the views hidden yesterday by the wretched mists." We should have liked to stay for a week at Monte Splügen, but storms are of daily occurrence, we were told, and being late in the season we dared not risk it lest we were caught by the snow and kept there for the next eight months. Breakfast over, we went to make preparations for departure. The visitors and hotel dependents gathered round Mercédès in the little *douane* to see us start. "In five minutes there will be snow," said the genial patron who had accompanied us to the car. We gazed incredulously at the clear sky. "Look you there," he added, pointing to the snowfields, and we perceived that a thick white mist, hardly distinguishable on the snow, was quickly sweeping over them, enveloping, one after the other, the different peaks. Elsewhere there was not the

slightest sign of a storm, the sun still shone out of a brilliant sky upon a scene almost summer-like, and though the air was keen, the rays of the sun could be easily felt. "Is that really snow?" said Sheila, shading her eyes with her hand and gazing up at the thickening mists. "How delightful to see a real snowstorm upon the pass." "Especially if it keeps us here till next June," Ken broke in. Sheila clapped her hands at this.

We wasted no time, but donned our great furs, and wrapped the rugs tightly around us: even as we glided out upon the road, and waved our hands in reply to the many good wishes, a few snowflakes came fluttering down. As the village disappeared beneath us, the sun ceased to shine and the snowflakes grew thicker and thicker till we were enveloped in a blinding storm of snow; one of those storms that have proved so fatal to many an unfortunate traveller. The temperature was well below zero, and as the cold became more intense, Mercédès began to slacken speed, the petrol evidently refusing to be vapourised; unfortunately the engine had not run five minutes, and everything was cold, and what is worse, was becoming colder each moment. The glass screen was absolutely obscured with snow, and I had to lean over the side of the seat to see round it, thus unprotected, facing the storm. Down we came to the first speed, and as she gradually slackened even on that, I opened the throttle wider and wider. Any other day we should have been shaken to pieces by the vibrations of the engine had I opened the throttle

but half the distance I did now; still the motor faltered. If once the engine stopped no power on earth would get it going again, and it was only by nursing it with the utmost care, that I could keep it running at all. The road wound up the mountain side in zigzags, but only that portion immediately before us could we see and were totally unable to gain any idea of the scenery. The cold was bitter, enabling us to conjure up a very realistic idea of the terrible suffering and hardships of the Second French Army of Reserve under Macdonald, in the winter of 1800, when they fought their way with splendid endurance and bravery over the pass.

Seven hundred feet above Monte Splügen, and 7000 feet above the sea, stands the summit; the road is only level for a few yards before it plunges down the other side. A lonely cottage, built of stone, stood by the wayside, and from its doorway a soldier, muffled up to the eyes, stepped out and forbade us to proceed further, being upon the exact boundary between Italy and Switzerland. By the little shelter we stopped, though still keeping the engine running, and presently the snowstorm began to slacken and at length ceased altogether. Before us the road disappeared into the mists, and as we sat quietly in our seats a wonderful and beautiful thing happened. As though by a mighty hand the thick veil of cloud was torn asunder and revealed the village of Splügen lying peacefully in the valley, bathed in sunshine. Above it and us rose a range of the most majestic mountains I have ever seen,

all standing radiant in the sunlight. In an instant the storm had been swept from existence, and there spread out before us a picture worthy of the Engadine in which it lay. Soon the sun shone upon us, driving the remnants of the storm down the road we had ascended. As quickly as it had sprung up so did it vanish, leaving not the faintest trace in the clear blue sky, and there remained to mark its passage only a sheet of virgin snow upon the mountain-side. Leaving the car upon the summit we walked down the road into Switzerland till we could see its whole length winding in quiet curves down to the village far below. Unlike the Italian side, there are no terrifying scenes upon this road; even the corners looked less sharp and the gradient decidedly easier. Though the air was cold it was fresh and clear as crystal, very different from ten minutes before. The views of the snow were glorious, and we congratulated ourselves heartily upon gaining the summit. The soldier-guardian accepted a cigar to comfort him in his lonely duty, and half an hour later we terminated our brief visit to the Engadine. Some day, who knows? when the spirit of understanding shall enter into the minds of those who rule, that delightful canton may be opened, under restrictions, to those who dearly love its beauties, even though they prefer to be carried through them by tireless machines rather than let horses kill themselves on this work. With our backs to the Engadine we commenced the descent to Monte Splügen: this time we were treated to a multitude of exquisite views. At the little village

ON LOOKING DOWN WE COULD SEE A SOLID COLUMN OF BOILING, LIVING WATER

THE SPLÜGEN PASS

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a welcome awaited us, our appearance being signalled far in advance, and when we arrived, our friends lined the road. We stopped for a few moments to tell our experiences of the storm, and amidst a volley of good-byes and kind words left that hospitable and delightful little place upon our long and perilous descent.

The bright sunshine revealed innumerable wonders hid by the mists yesterday and the descent ranked as one of our most enjoyable drives. At the great waterfall of Pianazzo we halted, and dismounting, walked along the stone platform that is built out directly above the spot where the enormous mass of water rushes over the rock. On looking down we could see a solid column 800 feet long, of boiling, living water, which roared aloud with deafening noise. From the spot on which we stood is obtained a splendid view of the record-breaking road which twists and turns, and burrows in and out of the rock, as it makes its hazardous climb down the face of the precipice. The climb down the "Jacob's ladder," as Dorothy christened the road, was both thrilling and enjoyable. Emerging from one of the avalanche galleries we came unexpectedly upon a five-horsed diligence whose occupants showed considerable excitement, and the horses fear at our appearance. A large flock of sheep was waiting patiently for us in the darkest part of one of the tunnels and completely belied their character of quiet animals by endeavouring to lift Mercédès bodily off the ground in their frantic endeavours to pass. Queer-looking animals they were, with great round noses which

started in one unbroken curve from the back of their necks, and long heavy ears.

By now we knew the worst and the wonders of the road no longer terrified us—only made us marvel at the audacity and pluck of the Austrians who, eighty-seven years ago, conceived and executed such a road over the then trackless Splügen. At Campo Dolcino we arrived without mishap, and lunched at the Poste Hôtel; the people staying there had heard of our wild rush past, the previous afternoon, and were anxious for particulars of our adventures in the clouds. Leaving the hotel we passed again through the valley of avalanches now bathed in warm sunshine and, save for one or two frightened horses that we met, descended the numerous turns and steep gradients and reached Chiavenna without mishap early in the afternoon, staying for a moment at the hotel to let them know that we *had* accomplished their impossibility, in spite of "such a huge automobile," as they had delighted to remark. The Majola, another delightful climb from Chiavenna, was impossible as bad luck would have it. The frontier line of the Engadine passed well this side of the summit, thus depriving us of a glorious drive. Back to the little lake we drove, speeding along its still waters beneath the hills and in due time joined the Val Tellina. To our right, standing upon rising ground, and surrounded by fields of maize, are the ruins of the old Spanish Castle of Fuentes, destroyed by the French, and once the key of that unfortunate valley. At Colico we joined Lake Como, and while following its historic waters were upon familiar

A SPLENDID VIEW OF THE RECORD-BREAKING ROAD
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ground and also in unbearable heat, for we had descended 6500 feet and were in truth in sunny Italy.

At Varenna we rested the night, its hotel, charmingly situated upon the edge of the lake, and surrounded by beautiful gardens. That evening we dined upon the cool terrace above the still water. Now and then our table would be illuminated by the dazzling rays of the searchlight of the Italian soldiers looking for smugglers upon the dark banks. The promontory of Bellaggio lying barely a mile away, seemed to float upon the glassy surface; in the distance the mountains rose up, a purple mirage of peaks; sitting there in the open air, it was hard to realise, while gazing upon the perfect night, that we had the same day been fighting for life in the snowstorm, almost frozen by the cold.

In the cool of the morning we passed along the lake-side, its towering hills protecting it from the sun and casting a welcome shadow over the road. Crossing the source of the Adda at Lecco, we traversed the easy and vine-bordered road which leads to the other leg of the lake. At Como, we did not stay, but touching the water's edge for a moment only, climbed the gentle hill that leads into Switzerland. At Capolago we were in sight of Lake Lugano, and gliding 'neath the shadow of Monte Generosa crossed the lake and reached Lugano.

Lugano possesses an enviable situation gazing tranquilly upon mountain and lake, while enjoying an ideal climate. The road leading into the Val Ticino passes through beautiful though quiet scenery, and crosses Monte Cenere, a short and easy climb. At

one spot—it was a corner about half-way up a rather steep hill—we came upon the unusual sight of an automobile balanced upon the top of a low wall at the roadside, and surrounded by a dozen or so people. We were ascending at a fairly high speed, but pulled up at once to see if we could render any assistance. We learnt, however, that the accident had happened the day previous. The car, a new one, had been descending the hill too quickly, and coming to the corner, the driver applied his brakes hard; these failing to answer, the car continued its rapid course, coming to a sudden stop as it encountered the stone wall. That wall evidently saved the lives of the four occupants, for it prevented the car from plunging into a deep ditch which really formed the dried-up bed of a stream; and save for a lady who was thrown out, no one was injured. The lady was hurt in the head, but, so it was said, was out of danger. Sympathy we expressed to the gentleman who was in charge, and I had a fellow-feeling for him in his misfortune, having had the doubtful pleasure of being mixed up in one or two serious accidents myself, from which I providentially emerged safely, and gained the necessary experience that is inseparable to the making of a perfect driver. As we could be of no assistance we continued our way.

Once in the Val Ticino we followed the road to Bellinzona and again joined familiar ground. At Locarno, we filled up with benzine and followed the edge of Lago Maggiore to Pallanza, crossing the same frontier where I had last summer deposited the 600 frs. that had never been refunded, and, I am afraid,

never will be.* From Pallanza we drove along the banks of beautiful Orta and thence over the flat plains of Piedmont, steeped in history, to Turin. During our former visit to Italy the Mont Cenis had been denied to us on account of snow; but now it lay open and in the direct path to Chamonix, where, though late in the season, we had decided to spend a few days. From Turin we made an early start, the road leading straight towards the formidable mountains that divide Piedmont and Savoy. Susa with its Roman Triumphal Arch lies at the foot of two passes, and from here starts the "Strada Romana," as the natives call the road. The Mont Cenis is perhaps the best-known pass over the great chain of the Alps, and once again automobilists owe to Napoleon their thanks for the magnificent road: it is splendidly engineered, with turns exceedingly wide and easy, and a gradient that offers little difficulty. It is a pass on which one can let a car have full play without fear of being precipitated over the road's edge, or of being brought to a sudden standstill at the elbows. It is one long, glorious rush, climbing some 5900 feet in a dozen miles. The day was glorious even for Italy, the air bright and clear, and save for the 23 shelter huts, there was nothing to remind the traveller of the terrible ravages of "La Lombarde," the local wind when it tears over the Pass, sweeping bare all opposition and adding each time to its already gruesome reputation. Near the

* After considerable trouble, and the lapse of one year and nine months, the Italian Government has refunded £23 11*s.* 4*d.* in respect of this claim.

summit the road climbs in gentle 'hairpins,' and we catch many views of the old road clinging to the side of the valley: very terrible must have been the passage when that was the only path, exposed to continuous avalanches. It was destroyed every spring until Napoleon gave orders to build the present road and thus convert the once perilous passage into the safest route of any over the higher passes. Just beneath the summit 6900 feet above sea level, lies a little green lake, and beside its emerald waters we dismounted to admire the snow views upon the surrounding mountains. The scenery is very fine, the hills are dotted with numerous fortifications, many already snow-bound. Half a dozen soldiers dragging a provision cart passed close to us, and leaving the road followed a narrow winding track which wound up the steep slope till it was lost in the snow.

The old Hospitz, said to have been built by Charlemagne's son Louis le Débonnaire, and, of course, remodelled and rebuilt by Napoleon, has degenerated into a barrack, and a portion used as an hotel offers little interest. The descent into France is also fine, though the views are not so grand as on the Italian side. At Modane we were in France, and after a slight examination at the *douane*, where our luggage was looked into, we followed the road along the valley of the Arc. It was afternoon when we reached the little village of Ugines and branched sharply to the right, entering a delightful little gorge, the road following up the stream crossing and recrossing it several times and burrowing twice

through the rock. With a quick turn the road climbs out of the gorge to the hamlet of Flumet, where, for the second time that day, our *passavant* was endorsed. Once through the *douane* we were out of France, yet still in France; this sounds strange, but is merely a way of saying that we had entered the neutral zone between Switzerland and France. Continuing the climb we presently reached the summit where, for some distance the road is level and passes through pasture lands. The sky was brilliantly clear—not a cloud was visible—and the sun, already down in the west, lit up the dazzling form of Mont Blanc and all its subject hills. It was a superb view, that glimpse of Mont Blanc, above the green foliage. The air was wonderfully clear and the great mass appeared quite close, completely dwarfing the valleys and mountains in whose midst it stood.

After descending some distance the road divides into two, and we followed that which led to the right climbing down the gentle hill in one long curve. At one particular place the road is extremely narrow, and naturally this was the spot ordained by fate where we should meet the one and only carriage that we encountered during the whole descent. A rather peculiar adventure resulted from our polite endeavours to give the aforesaid carriage as much room as possible, and this is what happened: A glimpse showed me that the ground on the outside of the road was nothing but loose soil and turf; no wall or protection intervened, and the hillside sloped down directly into the valley. I

certainly did not like the look of the soft grass, and I feared that if we pulled Mercédès on to it the whole ground might give way and precipitate us and a fair portion of the road into the pasture lands below. I had, of course, only the usual second in which to make up my mind, and as the horse looked a quiet animal I drew the car on to the grass at the other side of the road, almost touching the bank. Without hesitation or sign of fear the horse walked quietly past, and at the same time we felt Mercédès sink down upon the side nearest the bank: thinking that she would have no difficulty in regaining the hard ground I let in the clutch, and—stopped the engine. Dennis jumped out to restart the motor and found the ground soft as butter. The two right wheels of Mercédès had sunk deep into the ground and were sinking deeper every moment. "Lighten the car," I cried. Ken and I quickly descended from our seats, an example promptly followed by Sheila and Dorothy. Mercédès was heeling over like a stricken ship; every second the axles sank lower, and the petrol-tank, unless we could prevent it, would soon be crushed flat. Ken I sent for wood, and Dennis and I with some stones that, fortunately, were lying at the roadside, built a solid foundation beneath, and with more stones supported the two axles, thus, for a time, averting disaster. Ken returned with two miserable-looking farm labourers carrying several long planks. I asked if we could obtain horses, but, alas! no, they replied, all the horses, mules, and bullocks were in the valley, and much time would elapse before they could be

fetched. An inspiration came to Ken, and he inquired lovingly for the horse that had landed us into the trouble. It had long since vanished "from our ken," as Dorothy slily remarked. While we were discussing the situation a party of men, perhaps a dozen, arrived upon the scene, evidently on the tramp to the valley, and pulled up in joyful anticipation of an automobile breakdown. Directly they heard that we wanted horses to drag Mercédès on to the hard road they volunteered, with all the goodwill in the world, to get us out of the mess themselves. There were eleven of them, Ken and his two merry men, Dennis, and I, making sixteen in all, not counting Sheila and Dorothy, who, as Sheila promised, would lend us their moral support, and, as true Frenchmen, the noble thirteen would do their utmost to rescue beauty in distress. Under our directions the willing helpers grasped the spokes of the wheels and steel frame, and were with difficulty persuaded to refrain from moving the car by means of the radiator, lamps, mud-guards, and back-panel. First we dug a trench in a line from the wheels on to the hard road and laid down boards, shoving them as far under the tyres as possible. Taking a firm grip of the desired parts we stood ready; Sheila cried "*En avant!*" and simultaneously we threw all our weight into the task. For a second Mercédès remained adamant, and then, with a sort of gasp as the wheels left the clinging mess, she slowly, oh! so slowly, moved forwards till at last she stood upon the hard road, and we sat on her steps to recover breath. On

rewarding our friends-in-need we were not allowed to depart without shaking hands all round, and when we finally resumed our seats they waved their hats and shouted "*Bon voyage*" and "*Adieu*" with the heartiest of goodwill, ending with three cheers worthy of British throats.

During the rest of the descent we took especial care to keep on firm ground, and reached the main road from Salanches without further mishap. At one place in the valley where the opposing mountains threaten to join, the road passes over the stream and beneath the electric railway, and enters the beautiful valley of Chamonix, passing at the foot of the glaciers. Chamonix was completely deserted, only one hotel remained open and almost all the shops, with their same interminable wooden chalets and models were closed. Four days we stayed here: the weather was exceptional for that time of the year. Though the sun shone brightly the snow line was very near to the road, and upon tramping up the winding path to the Mer-de-Glace we found it had already received its first winter's mantle, and the path lay deep in snow. Chamonix and its surroundings are very beautiful, more so when it is bordering upon its long winter than in the height of summer. Even as we left upon the fifth morning a gentle shower of snow was falling, warning us not to linger.

After Cluses the road to Geneva is uninteresting, and lies in a broad, flat valley. Between there and Switzerland, Mercédès managed to pick up two long horsenails which did not hesitate to revenge

themselves by emptying the two front tyres one after the other. With our R.A.C. papers we smiled sweetly upon officials of the *douane*, and a few miles further reached Geneva. We stayed for tea at a pretty little *café* and then followed the calm waters of Lake Leman as far as Nyon where we turned sharp into the hills and ascended "The Dôle." The road is easy and well-made, but it was almost dark when we reached St. Cergues, where a large hotel looks down upon the lake and up at the Mont Blanc range. It was our farewell to beautiful Switzerland and the Alps. After one long, lingering look, we left next morning, and turning our backs upon their glories headed straight for Boulogne. France and the Channel alone lay between us and home. A dear old familiar France, with roads straight as railway tracks and well-remembered scenes on every hand. Through Besançon, city of sieges, to Châlons, in the march of the Prussians, we crossed Champagne. At Amiens, whose Gothic minster towers into the sky, we joined the main road from Paris; Boulogne to Folkestone, and we were again in Merry England, merry for the police I mean, thus terminating another delightful tour.

On the last evening Ken gave a dinner to celebrate our three tours in the north, the south and the middle of Europe. For now our party was to be broken up. The next tour of Mercédès was planned for the spring, when she would explore the north coast of Africa from Oran to Tunis; from the Mediterranean to the Sahara.

Only three favoured mortals would she carry.

Dennis will be one.

Need I mention the other two?

Therefore, at dinner we were both joyful and sad. Joyful at the coming event, yet sorry that the tours had come to an end. As we talked over our adventures and recollections, healths were drunk, but none more heartily than that of Mercédès, the divine goddess, who had carried us from country to country with untiring energy, revealing their wonders one after the other, and above all giving us a life beneath the open sky and in the open air: a life once tasted never to be equalled in this world, and one always offering a fascination that never palls.

Ken's expressions, short as they were, best sum up the impressions that the tours left upon our minds.

"It's been the best time I've ever had," he said. "I've seen more, done more, and enjoyed myself more than ever I thought possible in such a short time. Yachting, riding, shooting, are grand, but automobiling beats them all. It's the finest sport imaginable. We've covered many thousands of miles over roads good, bad, and indifferent, and passed through many countries: we've seen into their people's lives as none but those who travel by road can ever hope to see into them. We've crossed a score of great passes, and during the whole time have never had a moment's anxiety that could have been avoided. We've scorched along the open roads at the greatest speed Mercédès could attain, but I'm proud to say we've never been hauled up for racing

through towns or villages. Save for one or two dogs and a few hens our death-roll has been nil. We've had trouble; bad trouble, with horses, but thanks perhaps to luck, and much to patience, we've returned still with a clean sheet. And what is more, I am sure that we are ready to go over the same roads again, and be sure of a welcome from the people we've encountered. In conclusion, therefore, I drink the toast of 'Mercédès and her owner.'"

"Future owners," I suggested.

"To her future owners, all health and happiness," Ken smiled; and while Dorothy and he rose to drink the toast, I felt Sheila's hand upon my own, and looking into her glorious eyes, saw heaven there.

EPILOGUE

A FEW words in respect to Continental touring may be of use, coupled with several hints gained from personal experience. First and foremost comes the question of maps which, when gathered together, form a very heavy and bulky parcel. Ours we carried in a special trunk, which, when filled, weighed considerably more than any other box on the car. The Royal Automobile Club furnishes a very complete list of maps to its members, also for this reason it is advisable to join the touring clubs of France, Switzerland and Italy, especially Italy, whose T.C. is exceedingly generous in the matter of maps, and publishes an excellent contour book, as well as providing many valuable privileges. The maps of the following countries are obtainable from the R.A.C.: for France, the set of Taride maps, good and clear, but useless for gradients; *Les Routes de France*, and the hotel list books published by the A.C.F., the T.C.F., the Michelin and Continental Tyre Companies; for Germany, Ravenstein's maps and others, with hotel lists; for Italy, there are maps in abundance, as there are for Tirol, Austria, and Denmark. But for all-round excellence one must look to Switzerland: those published by her T.C. show the mountains clearly marked, and the road is coloured as the gradient varies; like

the country they come from, they are simple and altogether trustworthy. Swedish maps we could obtain only in that country: they were the ordinary military survey maps printed on frail paper. For Spain one map is published, a large, ungainly affair, useless for detail; also the hotel and distance lists of the R.A.C.E. Baedeker I do not need to mention, its value is too well known and appreciated, and we owe many thanks to its accurate information as to hotels.

Custom duties are the next source of worry. The majority of these nuisances can be overcome by members of the R.A.C., but in the countries of Spain, Norway, and Sweden one must run the risk of the deposit, as no permits are issued. Petrol can be obtained almost anywhere, but varies greatly in quality, price, and method of delivery according to its surroundings. In France, Germany, Switzerland, Tirol, and Denmark it is easy to obtain, and usually in good tins. In Italy it is often stored in large barrels and served out carelessly in jugfuls, or carried in an open bucket along the streets. I have seen a garage man cheerfully wash his hands in an open basin of benzine smoking a cigarette the while! In Spain the quality is better, and it is obtainable in all the large towns of the North, though sometimes difficult to get in the South. At Cadiz, for instance, we had to go from chemist to chemist in search of the precious fluid, and by degrees (for they keep it in small bottlefuls for cleaning the clothes) collected about 4½ gallons for which, by the way, we paid forty-five

shillings. Lubricating oil was our greatest trouble, as Mercédès devoured it greedily, and its quality was a source of constant anxiety. In Spain it is generally good, the common price is 15*s.* per gallon and upwards; in other countries it is easy to obtain, though in Italy one has to be very careful to get it, if possible, only in sealed tins; those issued by the T.C.I., WITH SEAL UNBROKEN, can be safely trusted.

On tyres I could write a volume. In Spain alone we used up ten outer covers in two months as well as a multitude of inner tubes. Of those used in other countries we have completely lost count. Long ago we gave up steel-studded tyres, as we found they got hot and burst in a few days. Strong, heavy, plain covers last the longest, and on greasy roads we slip on a pair of Parsons' chains. As to finding accommodation for the car at nights, we had much difficulty in many of the remoter districts, especially in South Spain, but help was always cheerfully forthcoming. Hotels are varied. One night we slept in a palatial establishment with every comfort; the next in a cottage where one was glad to obtain shelter. Travelling often for days far from civilisation, one must be absolutely competent to do any repair to the car that may be necessary. This naturally entails carrying a very complete workshop of tools and a multitude of spares. But once let the motor fever get thoroughly into the system, there is no sport in the world that offers so much enjoyment and social pleasure, or brings better health and spirits than a series of long Continental tours.

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